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OF
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BY JOHN ADOLPHUS, ESQ.

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THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

GEORGE THE THIRD.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH.

1793—1794—1795.

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LXXXVII.

1794.

General success of the French.
Hoche tranquillizes La Vendée.

War in Spain.

DURING these transactions, and throughout the rest of the year, success attended the French arms in all parts of the Continent.

General Hoche, who had been imprisoned and threatened with destruction by Robespierre, being released after his fall, and intrusted with the command in La Vendée, tranquillized those provinces*. The republican troops, liberated from this service, were employed, under General Dugommier, against the Spaniards, in the eastern Pyrennees, where they regained their own territory, and carried their conquering arms into the province of Catalonia. In the western Pyrennees, the French pressed their conquests as far as Pampeluna, marking their course by sanguinary executions and rapacious exactions. The Spaniards displayed bravery in every encounter; but the repeated successes of the enemy caused consternation in the court of Madrid, which was increased by insurrections in many parts of the kingdom: the principles as well as the arms of France began to exert their sway; and rumours of a disposition to make peace on any terms were generally circulated.

In Italy.

The armies of the Alps and Italy made their first attack on Oneglia, the only port through which the King of Sardinia could communicate with the English,

* Vie de Lazare Hoche, tome i. Réponse de Carnot à Bailleul, p. 148. It is related, that when the exploits of Hoche raised him into celebrity, he was ordered to Paris. Carnot saw in him a man of great genius and commanding talent, and promised to promote him. Robespierre considered him a person of dangerous boldness and activity, sent him to prison, and intended his destruction. "Fortunately," says the French author, "Robespierre forgot him, and Carnot did not."

or with his own insular dominions. To attain this object, they violated, in defiance of every remonstrance, the neutrality of the Genoese territory, and, having captured the town, pursued their successes, until, at the fall of Robespierre, they were masters of the summits of the Alps in Savoy and the country of Nice; but, unable, during the present campaign, to penetrate into Piedmont, they remained in winter quarters, securing all their acquisitions in the Alps*.

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1794.

For some time after the battle of Fleurus, the French remained inactive, awaiting, as it was believed, the fall of Condé and the other places still retained by the allies. To accelerate their surrender, the Convention passed a decree, that all these garrisons, if they did not surrender within four and twenty hours after being summoned, should be put to the sword. To a citation thus announced, the officer in command at Condé answered, that no nation could have a right to decree that the soldiers of another nation should dishonour themselves. Landrecies surrendered; but Condé, Quesnoi, and Valenciennes held out; and the new government, ashamed of the barbarous decree, yet not possessing sufficient magnanimity to revoke it, evaded its effect by pretending that it had not been duly notified to the three commanders. The sieges were pressed, and the garrisons, expecting no succour, capitulated.

In Flanders.

Condé.

August 29.

General Moreau, commanding a division of the army of the north, captured Nieupoort. The garrison were Hanoverians: the French General, at the risk of his life, abstained from executing the inhuman decree of the Convention; but he shewed less compassion to several hundred emigrants, who were mercilessly butchered†.

July 18.
Nieupoort.

The French General, having resolved to besiege Sluys, it became necessary to gain possession of Cad-sand, at which there was no way of arriving, but by a causeway, inundated on both sides and commanded

Sluys.

* *Histoires, Victoires et Conquêtes, &c.*

† At this period the General's father fell under the axe of the guillotine, as an ex-noble; and it is intimated that the same lot was preparing for himself.

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LXXXVII.

1794.

August 25.

Holland.

July 13.
Proclamation
of the Stadt-
holder.Conduct of the
patriots.

August 4.

August 4, 5

by fourteen pieces of cannon, or by throwing a bridge over the strait of Coschische, which he could not effect for want of pontoons. He possessed only a few boats, in which some of the troops passed, while others swam across, and, forming in the face of a superior force, and of numerous batteries, captured the island, with ninety pieces of cannon, a great quantity of ammunition and provision, and two hundred prisoners. After a spirited and protracted resistance, Sluys surrendered; the invaders had suffered severely; not by military operations alone, but from the mortality which ensued from their unprovided condition in an unhealthy situation.

The time was now come when the Dutch were to be taught, by woful experience, the certainty of national degradation, and the destruction of all pretensions to independency, which must result from the rejection of long-established systems and well-trying alliances, and the introduction of a foreign aid, with unnatural influence and ascendancy. Justly alarmed at the prospect of danger, the Stadtholder had appealed, in an energetic address, to the patriotic feelings of the people, reminding them of the glorious example of their ancestors in resisting the power of Spain, and exhorting all classes to repel the delusions of fallacy and corruption, and co-operate in securing to themselves liberty, independence, and personal happiness. To the patriots, as they called themselves, these sentiments were addressed in vain. In their anxiety to depress an authority which they hated, they were content to give up their country to the rule and the spoliation which they saw so fatally prevailing in the neighbouring provinces. The Prince proposed a levy of one man in ten; the States assented, and, to excite a general spirit, another proclamation was issued; but, under the influence of those who so long had been misleading them, aided by French agents and emissaries, the people resisted the mandate, and shewed a general disposition to court the fraternity of France.

Compelled to give ground before the greatly superior forces of his opponents, the Duke of York

marched to the plains of Breda, expecting that the Dutch would put the town in a state of defence, for which it is most favourably situated, having a strong citadel, and being placed in a country affording great facilities for inundation. Pichegru, who, after a short illness, had resumed the command of the army, anxious to pursue the Duke of York, made, for the present, only a feint of besieging Breda, and executed a general attack on all the outposts along the Dommel. At that of Boxtel, which was chiefly protected by the troops of Hesse Darmstadt, the republicans passed the river on planks and by swimming, and destroyed or captured fifteen hundred men. General Abercromby was deterred by the too great force of the enemy from making an attempt, which had been projected, for recovery of this important post; and the Duke of York, incapable of resisting, with only twenty thousand, an attack of four score thousand, retreated across the Meuse, and encamped at Wichen.

While the French army of the north took a position behind the river Aa, and proceeded to Denter, intermitting for a while the pursuit of the Duke of York, that of the Sambre and Meuse defeated the left wing of the Austrians, and, after a series of well-conducted engagements, compelled them to cross the Rhine at Cologne, after losing nearly ten thousand men. In the last battle, at Ruremonde, Clerfaye posted and commanded the centre with such skill and bravery, that the French were preserved from defeat and ruin only by an unaccountable failure of duty in the wings of his army. To urge their men forward, the French planted artillery in their rear. Their success enabled them to take possession of Cologne and Bonn.

As the enemy were now entirely masters of Flanders, their partizans in Holland assumed greater confidence, and the friends of the Stadtholder felt increased alarm. Such was the prevailing spirit of disaffection, that Crevecoeur, although well fortified and prepared against a siege, surrendered without resistance: thus the French became masters of the inundations which constituted the principal strength of Bois-le-duc. With

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LXXXVII.

1794.

The Duke of
York retreats
to Breda.

Proceedings of
Pichegru.

September 14.

15th.
Retreat of the
Duke of York.

19th.
Of the Aus-
trians.

19th to Oct. 3.

The French
take Creve-
coeur.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1794.

17th.

November 4.

6th.

7th.

8th.

Nov. 5th.

equal facility the Dutch abandoned fort St. André; but it was recaptured by General Abercromby, who put it in a condition to resist any sudden attack.

The Duke of York established his head quarters at Arnheim, and the French prepared to besiege Nimeguen. Many skirmishes took place in front of this town; and Major-General De Burgh, by a spirited sortie, obtained temporary possession of the works of the besiegers, defeating them with great carnage: but these efforts did not avert, or even materially delay, the fate of the place. The French opened batteries on the town and bridge, which sunk several of the boats; and had they fully succeeded, the whole garrison must have been taken prisoners: but the Duke of York ordered the men to secure themselves by crossing the bridge, leaving pickets under Major-General De Burgh, who with great difficulty also effected his retreat: the Dutch garrison were taken prisoners. In the mean time, General Laurent had made himself master of Venloo; Kleiber took Maestricht; Coblenz and Rheinfeld yielded to the right wing of the army of the Sambre and Meuse; and Mentz alone remained in possession of the allies on the left bank of the Rhine.

After the evacuation of Nimeguen, the British army went into cantonments along the Waal, from Bommel on the right, where they joined the Dutch, to Parmeren on the left, where they communicated with the Austrians. The French were more fatigued, and had not fewer invalids, in proportion, than the allies; they were therefore obliged, after some unsuccessful attacks on the island of Bommel, to desist from further enterprises, and rest in their present advantageous position, relying, with a confidence which was justified by the event, on the evacuation of Breda and the Grave by the Dutch.

December 12.

October.
Proceedings of
the Dutch at
Amsterdam.

Some citizens of Amsterdam, to secure their persons and property, thought fit to emigrate. Application was made to the British government to obtain assistance for others who might follow the same course; but Lord Grenville answered, that His Majesty, far

from aiding, wished to check and discourage such a measure, considering it highly prejudicial to the Republic, and of the common cause. The magistrates issued a proclamation, exhorting men not to be misled by alarming speeches, or persuaded into actions of which they could not foresee the consequences, and particularly not to join in making addresses calculated to interfere with the administration of public affairs, under pain of rigorous prosecution. The ground of this proceeding was an effort which the disaffected were making to create a popular sensation on the arrival in the city of the hereditary Prince of Orange and the Duke of York. The Prince had issued, in the name of his father, an address, inviting the people to unite in defence of their lives and property, and promising to fight along with them for the salvation of the country. The States of Holland, West Friesland, and Overysse had readily acceded to the propositions thus promulgated; but in Amsterdam, the disaffected framed a petition complaining of the presence of the hereditary Prince and the Duke of York, as intended only to enforce resolutions, the execution of which must be highly injurious. It had been proposed, they said, that, on the approach of the French, the town should be put on the most complete footing of defence, and subjected to all the inconveniences of a siege; the grand inundation was to be formed, by opening the sluices and breaking the sea dykes; and a great number of English troops were to be admitted into the heart of the city. They were determined to resist and oppose all military defence, and particularly the introduction of English troops, whose approach they should look upon as a signal for a civil insurrection; for the fatal consequences of which the magistrates must answer. They recommended confidence in the patriotism and good-will of the inhabitants, instead of an attempt at a military defence, which would precipitate the town into misery and ruin. The persons who presented this audacious petition were ordered to be imprisoned; but the fabrication of it, so immediately after the proclamation, demonstrated the state of public

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1794.
13th.
Proclamation.

Arrival of the
Hereditary
Prince of
Orange and
the Duke of
York.
Proclamation
of the Prince.

Amsterdam
petition.
14th.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1794.

feeling, and shewed the complete ascendancy of the party*, who looked to the French as friends and deliverers, come to rescue them from tyranny and taxation, and to permit the poor, under the notion of fraternity, to plunder the opulent.

6th.
The Duke of
York quits the
command.

After the fall of Crevecoeur, the Duke of York resigned the command of the army, leaving it to General Walmoden. His Royal Highness was universally regretted; he had maintained exact discipline without unnecessary rigour, and displayed a mildness, equity, and impartiality, which endeared him to the whole army, preventing alike the enterprises of favouritism and the speculations of private interest, and obviating all those complaints and discontents which are so injurious to military service. His command had been peculiarly irksome and unhappy; out-numbered by brave and enterprising enemies, ill supported by subsidized friends, and betrayed by the very people in whose behalf the British nation had armed, he had the daily mortification to see his brave countrymen exposed to every privation and hardship, renouncing their comforts and sacrificing their lives in a contest where failure only increased the boastful triumphs of a vain-glorious foe, while success would not have acquired the gratitude of a misled and perfidious ally†.

Severe frost.

At this period the campaign might have closed, and the armies, as usual, retired into winter quarters, but for one of those extraordinary events which disorder the projects and frustrate the hopes of man. A frost of uncommon severity began. The Dutch government, having relied on inundation as the last means of defence, saw with alarm the facilities afforded to the invaders, and solicited peace; but the French, rejecting terms replete with advantages, and sagaciously refusing an armistice, took possession of the island of Bommel and Fort St. André; six hundred men crossed the Waal, near Tuyl, the ice being sufficiently formed to bear whole regiments of cavalry,

Proceedings of
the Dutch.

7th.
Progress of the
French.

* See the papers above referred to, Annual Register, vol. xxxvi. p. *422 et seq.

† See Memoirs of the Campaign, by Captain L. T. Jones.

with the heaviest cannon, and were soon followed by a very large force; but a detachment of British, Hessians, and emigrants, under General Dundas, forced them again to pass the river, with loss. A large body again crossed the Waal, near Bommel: General Dundas, after a smart skirmish at Geldermalsen, fell back upon Buren. It was resolved to retreat still farther, and take a position behind the Lech; but a sudden thaw renewed the hopes of the allies, and orders were issued for taking advantage of it by a combined attack. Unfortunately, the frost recommenced, with increased severity: the orders which had been given could not be retracted in time; and an action was fought, near Eldermasen, in which the allied troops, particularly the British, suffered considerably, every officer in the twenty-seventh regiment of foot being wounded.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1795.

January 4.

6th.

8th.

The Republicans now, with augmented force, attacked several points at the same time; one column passed the river at Pameren, and another at Ghent, but were repulsed; a third crossed near Nimeguen, and, in conjunction with two columns which had passed between Tiel and Dodewaert, attacked the whole British line on that side. The Austrians had abandoned Heusden, and crossed the Lech; and the Hanoverians, with General Coates's brigade, consisting of three British regiments, were obliged to fall back on Lent. The French, on a signal given, crossed the river in great numbers, and attacked General Coates's brigade, and drove it back on Lent, which they found in possession of the enemy, and, in consequence, retired across the Lingen, where they maintained themselves behind the river, near Elst.

10th.

The French obtained immediate possession of Buren and Culembourg, and prepared to besiege Gorcum, which, from the strength of its works, and the facility of inundation, had been considered the key of Holland. It was the head quarters of the Stadtholder; but the frost rendering resistance impossible, he quitted the untenable fortress, and finding, from the ascendancy of his enemies, that his residence was no longer secure,

Retreat of the
Stadtholder to
England.

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LXXXVII.

1795.
15th.

abandoned a country, which, forgetful of its duty as an independent state, was plunging with blindfold confidence into the most despicable and hopeless bondage. The Stadtholder, and a great number of respectable natives of Holland, who preceded or accompanied him, found a safe refuge and a cheering welcome in England.

Retreat of the
British.

14th.

15th.

At the time when the French troops crossed the Waal, General Bonneau left the environs of Breda, and attacked Gertruydenberg: the British troops, unable to maintain their position in the province of Utrecht, retreated toward Westphalia, after sustaining a severe attack all along their line from Arnheim to Amerongen. The province of Utrecht entered into a separate capitulation, receiving the French with prostrate submission and eager welcome, while the retreating army of the British was treated with savage cruelty, the sick and wounded insulted, plundered, and even murdered by these worthless and ungrateful allies. The intense coldness of the winter increased their miseries, and produced scenes of distress which cannot be reflected on without horror and anguish.

The French
gain entire
possession of
Holland.

20th.
22nd and 23rd.

A detail of the subsequent proceedings of the French would be little more than a geographical description of their passage through the United Provinces, and a repetition of uniform acts of submission by the Dutch. Gertruydenberg having surrendered, the province of Holland followed the example of Utrecht, and the French were received in Amsterdam. Bonneau's division took possession of Dordrecht, Rotterdam, the Hague, and Helvoetsluys, and General Macdonald entered Naerden. The province of Zeeland having also capitulated, the light troops, consisting chiefly of horse and artillery, marched into north Holland, and added to the wonders of the campaign the unprecedented circumstance of taking a fleet, at the entrance of the Zuyderzee, by land forces and artillery planted on the ice.

Overijssel, Groningen, and Frizeland were still in the possession of the British army; but diminished as they were in numbers, hostile as were the Dutch toward

them, and immensely superior in force as were the French, their situation could not be long tenable, nor, under such circumstances, desirable. A thaw having commenced, the depth of water rendered the passage by the usual route impracticable; and the French, under Macdonald, having taken a position between Campen, Zwill, and Deventer, while Moreau occupied Zutcher, General Abercromby became apprehensive that, in case of an attack, his retreat would be cut off, and therefore withdrew his troops from the advanced posts, and marched to Bentheim by way of Enchede and Veltheysen. The British head quarters were moved first to Osnaburgh, and afterward to Diepholt, the Republicans being every where received; by the decree of the new government, as friends. The province of Westphalia was occupied by forty thousand Prussians, in order to protect their frontier along the Ems, while the British forces marched to Bremen, and thence to Bremeelehe, where they embarked for England, after surmounting toils and difficulties seldom equalled, with a valour, perseverance, and discipline which were never surpassed*.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1795.

February 16.
Holland evacuated by the English.

24th.

March 5.

Corsica, the possession of which had been so surreptitiously acquired†, was subjected, but not united, to France: for twenty years, contempt and hatred were the only returns made by the indignant population for all endeavours to civilize their manners and improve their condition. The revolution in France gave a favourable turn to their feelings; in 1790, Paoli, having quitted England and resigned the pension so long allowed for his subsistence, was presented to the Constituent Assembly by Lafayette, received with acclamation by the people and national guard of Paris, and introduced to the King. In Corsica, his return was hailed with general rejoicing. Although he had attained the age of fourscore, his memory, his eloquence, and his courage were unabated, and the predilection of his countrymen rather enhanced than

Corsica.

Paoli well received in France.

In Corsica.

* In relating this campaign, I have consulted the anonymous history as far as it goes, Jones's Journal, David's History of Pichegru's Campaign, Victoires et Conquêtes, and other authorities.

† Vol. i. p. 318.

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1793.
April 2.
Gives umbrage
to France.

26th.

May 23rd.

June 4.

Revolt of the
island.

diminished. The Executive Council appointed him a general of division and commander of their troops of the line. The national guard chose him for their leader, the Electoral Assembly nominated him president; and thus he combined in himself every kind of power. This conduct of the Executive Council was not politic; but it must be ascribed to the spirit of that period*; and in effect the tranquillity of the island was attributed to his influence. The events of the 10th of August and the murder of the King totally changed his opinions; his disgust was undisguised, and his proceedings to gain power to resist the government of France drew down a series of addresses from the Republican Club of Toulon, followed by a decree for suspending his authority, and commanding him, with his procureur-général Syndic, to appear at the bar of the Convention. The General, knowing that obedience to this command was but another word for placing his neck under the axe of the executioner, wrote an evasive answer, regretting that his advanced age and the state of his health would not permit him to undertake so long a journey by sea and land: he offered to retire from the island of his birth and in which he was honoured, if it would contribute to the safety of the country and the establishment of liberty; but his conduct did not correspond with his professions. Barrère soon reported to the Convention that he was taking possession of the strong places, claiming the government, and displaying the white cockade; decrees of energy for increasing the military force and sending commissioners from the Convention were obtained. It was further ordered that Paoli should be brought to the bar; but as this decree could not be executed, the Convention prudently repealed it, and professed that they would try by mildness and conciliation to bring back the General to a sense of his duty, more especially as the island was threatened by the Spaniards.

Whether reconciliation were really intended, or,

* Montholon, v. iv, p. 51, *Memoirs of Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino*, vol. i. c. i.

which is more probable, the profession only a snare for the General and his adherents, the decree was too late.

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A sort of national convention, under the title of a Consulta, held at Corté, declared Paoli generalissimo; a military force was provided, and other measures taken for establishing a complete independence, although it was not actually and formally announced; but they threatened to make the French pay dearly for the blood of their king. Barrère had soon to report proceedings still more decisive. All the interior of the island, he said, was in a state of open counter-revolution; the commissioners of the Convention, reduced to the defensive, and in possession only of the maritime ports of Bastia, Calvi, and San Fiorenzo, protected by a few battalions. A decree was soon obtained declaring Paoli a traitor, and putting him out of the law, and for the accusation of Pozzo de Borgo and many others*.

1793.
May 26.

June 27.

July 17.

It is suggested that if the determination of the Corsicans had been referred to an assembly of the superior classes alone, extreme measures would not have been pursued. Over them Paoli had little influence; even those who had followed him from England were among the most refractory; but the mass of the people were unanimous in devoted attachment to their ancient chief; the death-head was displayed on every steeple, and Corsica was no longer French†.

Parties in
Corsica.

Before the expulsion of the English from Toulon, Paoli had been in correspondence with them, requesting succours; he wrote to the British ministry, expressing the wish of the people to be free, either as subjects or under the protection of Great Britain; and Commodore Linzee, with an inadequate force of three ships of the line and two frigates, was dispatched to blockade the three ports remaining to the French. He summoned the garrisons, promising them a safe conduct into their own country; they refused, and after an attack on the tower and redoubt of Fornilly,

Negotiation
with England.

Fruitless
attack on
Fornilly.

Sept. 30th.

* These facts are taken from the proceedings in the Convention at corresponding dates, *Moniteur*, Nos. 94, 138, 145, 158, 175, 181, and 201.

† Montholon, vol. iv, p. 52.

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Invasion of the
island.

opposite San Fiorenzo, in which his squadron sustained considerable damage, and after some other disasters, he returned to Toulon.

After the evacuation of that place, the British Admiral, receiving authentic accounts of the distress of the garrisons, and of a strong reinforcement which the Convention were preparing to send, employed his whole force in acquiring a territory which to both parties appeared so valuable; and Colonel Moore and Major Koehler were sent to the island to reconnoitre, while Sir Gilbert Elliot, the King's commissioner in the Mediterranean, went with them to make political arrangements with Paoli. Their reception by the people was most enthusiastic; but, on investigation, they found they had been misinformed as to the strength of the enemy; it was stated at two thousand land forces, with a body drawn from their ships, but found to exceed seven thousand. To effect the necessary preparations, the fleet sailed to Porto Ferrajo, in the isle of Elba; and, after much delay, occasioned by the state of the ordnance, reached the Martello* point in Corsica, whither Colonel Moore, with eight hundred men, of whom one hundred and fifty-eight were sailors, proceeded, intending to turn and attack the enemy's works; but when, by great labour and perseverance, the guns had been manually dragged to the destined point, it was found that the fortifications in the front of Martello and the tower of Fornilli were too judiciously constructed and too amply supplied to be endangered by the assailing force; and Colonel Moore, in consequence, took up a secure position on the heights.

Feb. 7.

The Martello
tower taken.

The situation of the fleet was not less embarrassing; the ships were anchored on the open coast, being prevented from entering the bay by the Martello tower. Lord Hood, conceiving that this might soon be silenced, ordered a line of battle ship and a frigate to attack it: they anchored within point blank shot and cannonaded the tower; but the stone walls, being

* Sometimes, and, I think, more properly, called Mortella.

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circular and of great thickness, threw off the balls; while two guns of the tower (there were no more) swept the decks of the men of war, and made fearful havoc. At last, red hot shot having set fire to the line of battle ship, both sheered off to escape conflagration. As nothing could be effected against this tower by sea, a land battery was erected; but the guns, being only six-pounders, were too feeble for their purpose. An eighteen-pounder was then procured from the Victory, which battered the walls, and the infantry firing continually into the embrasure, the garrison, consisting only of one midshipman and thirty-six privates, after having defied for a week the whole British fleet, surrendered*.

A fort, called the Convention Redoubt, was next to be assailed. The French had neglected to occupy a steep, rocky hill, distant about seven hundred yards, deeming it impracticable to draw cannon up so precipitous a crag. This difficulty was overcome by the energy of our seamen: after two days' hard labour, by the help of blocks and ship tackle, two eighteen pounders were hauled up and mounted upon the top of the rock, from whence the shot plunged into the redoubt. Another battery of smaller guns was also established on a neighbouring eminence. In two days, some of the French cannon were dismounted, and the rampart shattered. Orders were then given to storm, which were gallantly executed by Colonel Moore: after discharging a few shot, the tower of Fornilli also surrendered; and the French commander, alarmed at these events, evacuating St. Fiorenzo and the neighbouring forts, retreated toward Bastia.

Other forts
captured.

General Dundas advanced to the attack of this place: a recent augmentation of the garrison and the state of the fortifications appeared to the land officers to prevent every expectation of profiting by a sudden assault, and leave no hopes except from a blockade; but, by Lord Hood's direction, all the marines of the

Attack on
Bastia.

* This tower was the first of that species of fortification against which we had contended, and the model of many erected since.

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May 23.

Siege and capture of Calvi.

June 23.

June 19 to
July 19.

fleet, and those who had acted as marines, with about seven or eight hundred soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Villette, were landed, and, with a body of seamen under Captain Nelson, took post on a hill at a considerable distance from the outworks, erected batteries, and fired shot and shells. The enemy paid little attention to this cannonade; but a safe anchorage for the fleet, near the mouth of the harbour, having been discovered, enabling the besiegers to prevent the entrance of victualling vessels into the town, famine compelled the garrison, amounting to six thousand men, to surrender.

Calvi alone remained; and Sir Charles Stuart having arrived with a reinforcement of seven hundred men from Gibraltar, sailed with an army of two thousand, and landed near the town, which was well garrisoned and strongly fortified. Calvi being situated in a marsh, where the ague was endemic and the sultry weather most oppressive to northern constitutions, the general perceived that success could only be hoped from daring and precipitate measures. Without detailing the progress, the landing of troops, their labours, the stratagems on both sides, and each particular encounter, a general narrative of the transaction is succinctly given in a letter from Captain Nelson to the Duke of Clarence. "We landed about four miles to the westward of Calvi; in a month we were in full possession of every outpost of the enemy, with very trifling loss. Our batteries were erected with impunity in situations which the enemy ought to have prevented. Had they kept even a moderate lookout, our loss of men must have been great, every battery being within reach of grape shot from its opponent. When General Stuart sent in to ask if they had any terms to propose, their answer was, the motto of the town, *Civitas Calvis semper fidelis*. We were then only six hundred and fifty yards from the centre of the citadel, and they allowed us to erect very strong batteries under a mask without firing a single shot or shell. In a few days, our batteries, five hundred and sixty yards from the

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"citadel wall, were ready to open, their force consisting of twenty-one cannon, five mortars, and four howitzers. The General sent in to say that he should not fire on the black flags (hospitals). This note produced a negotiation, by which the enemy wanted to obtain a truce for twenty-five days; when, if no succours arrived, they agreed to surrender the town and shipping. Lord Hood and the General agreed to give them six days; but, whilst this was going on, four small vessels got in, which gave them hopes, I suppose, of more effectual relief; for they rejected our offer, and our fire opened with all the effect we could expect. Much of the parapet was beat down, and the houses in the citadel were either in ruins or in flames, when the enemy hung out a white flag, and requested a suspension of hostilities for a few hours to prepare terms. In twenty-four hours every thing was settled; we were to be put in full possession, and the garrison, and such of the inhabitants as chose, were to be transported to Toulon, without being prisoners of war; provided no effectual succours were thrown in by the French*."

August 1.

The contingency provided for did not occur; and, according to the capitulation, the garrison marched out with two pieces of cannon and the honours of war, while the victors took possession of the stores on shore, and two frigates and other shipping in the harbour.

10th.

In achieving this conquest, Colonel Moore acquired great honour for his bravery and judgment; Captain Nelson not less, for a display of all those qualities which raised him to such unparalleled renown in his profession. At the siege of Calvi he received a hurt, which at the time he treated as of small importance, but which destroyed the sight of his right eye. In the government dispatches, the list of killed and wounded given in by the superintendent-surgeon was subjoined; but Captain Nelson's name was accidentally left out, as he had gone aboard his ship to be

Captain Nelson
wounded.
July 10.

* Life of Nelson, by the Reverend James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur, LL.D. vol. i. p. 186.

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Corsica annexed to the British crown.

treated for his hurt by his own surgeon. Some weeks afterward, when he read the printed Gazette, he was somewhat offended at this trivial omission, but consoled himself by saying that one day he would have a gazette of his own; a prophecy which was frequently and gloriously verified*.

Before this conquest had been completed, the spontaneous and almost unanimous desire of the people had pronounced the annexation of the island to the British crown, and the inhabitants voluntarily submitted themselves subjects of King George. A constitution was decreed by a general provisional council, declaring its government to be monarchical, the legislative power being vested in the King and the representatives of the people in one house of parliament, which was to sit two years, subject to dissolution; but in such case, a new legislature was to be convoked within forty days. Provision was made for the due exercise of the duties of legislation, for freedom in discussion, and the formation and jurisdiction of competent tribunals; and the people were authorized to hope for freedom and happiness†.

June 17.
Thanks of
Parliament.

After the surrender of Bastia, Lord Grenville moved, in the House of Lords, for thanks to Lord Hood for his important services, which, on a division, was carried‡; and the five dissentient peers (the Duke of Bedford and the Earls of Lauderdale, Derby, Thanet, and Albemarle) signed a protest in five articles. In the House of Commons, a like motion was made by Mr. Dundas; and, after some speeches in opposition, by Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Fox, and other members, carried without a division.

20th.

Naval captures.

Many trading vessels were taken on both sides; but, from the greater extension of our commerce, the balance was much in favour of the enemy. In one year, from the 1st of February 1793, they lost three

* In relating these events, I have principally relied on the Life of Sir John Moore, by James Carrick Moore, Esq. and that of Lord Nelson by Clarke and McArthur. I have also consulted other Lives of the Admiral, by Southey and Churchill, and the histories and Gazettes.

† See the Constitution, Annual Register, vol. xxxvi. p. *449.

‡ 31 to 5.

hundred and sixteen ships, and took four hundred and ten*. These captures, as they occurred, were announced in terms of unmeasured boasting, the Convention listened, with the usual acclamations, to one of Barrère's displays of rodomontade and scurrility, in which, after general abuse of the British nation, and taunting reflections, repeated by rote from disaffected English publications, on Lord Howe, for keeping the British fleet at Torbay, he announced that the Committee of Public Safety had ships and a plan of naval campaign, and swore, in the name of Liberty, that France should conquer on the ocean. It is of small importance as matter of history, but not without some interest as a comment on such presumption, that, three days after the production of this report, a squadron of frigates, under Sir John Borlase Warren, captured, on the coast of France, after a conflict of three hours, *La Pomone* of forty-four guns, *Le Babet* of twenty-two, and, in pursuit after the action, *l'Engageante* of thirty-six, while *La Resolue* with difficulty effected her escape into Morlaix†.

Great efforts were certainly making to wrest from the English nation the sovereignty of the sea. A new squadron was preparing in Toulon; but the firmest reliance was placed on the grand fleet at Brest. It consisted of twenty-six ships of the line, one of which carried one hundred and ten guns; but France no longer possessed the officers whom education and experience had qualified to command, nor the men whom practice had rendered expert, and habit obedient. The officers appointed in the times of Louis the Sixteenth, being mostly of noble families in Brittany and Poitou, indignant at the excesses of the revolution, had emigrated and sought refuge in England; their place was supplied from the merchant service, in which had always been kept up a spirit of animosity against the armed navy, and the crews were recruited after the violent and hasty manner of the Jacobins. Peasants who had never seen the ocean were employed to

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Exultation of
the French.
April 30.

23rd.
Frigates taken
by Sir John
Borlase War-
ren.

Naval prepa-
rations of the
French.

The Brest
fleet.

* Annual Register, vol. xxxvi. p. *6; Thiers, tome vi. p. 284.

† London Gazette, April 28th.

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navigate and manœuvre ships of the line, under officers who had never been instructed in the command of vessels of war, or were promoted from the lowest degrees to stations which required knowledge both of the arts of the mariner and the manners of a leader. Bravery and enthusiasm would not fail them; but these qualities, however prevailing in the field, and important on the wave, could not, by themselves, assure the success of any naval operation. Jean Bon St. André, once a Calvinist minister, was commissioner from the committee, with power commensurate with those given to the deputies sent to the armies, and superseded in his authority the Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, who, although not before elevated to any distinguished rank, had yet the endowment of a naval education.

May.
Sails.

Animated by their own enthusiasm and cheered by the acclamations and good wishes of their friends on shore, these brave but inexperienced mariners left the port; but with orders merely to cruise, and not enter into a general conflict, unless with a decided superiority, or under an insurmountable necessity. A principal, if not the only motive for sending forth this fleet, was to protect the safe arrival of a great convoy of food and other supplies, expected from America and the West Indies; so necessary, that, if intercepted, the subsistence of Paris would be affected, and great commotions were apprehended*.

May 2.

Motions of the
English fleet.

Lord Howe sailed from Saint Helens with thirty-two ships of the line. To him were attached Admirals Sir Alexander Hood and Graves, and Rear Admirals Pasley, Caldwell, Bowyer, and Gardner. He had in view three great objects; to protect an outward-bound East India fleet to a sufficiently southern latitude to insure its safety; to intercept the West India convoy expected by the French, and to engage their armament, if it ventured out from Brest. The first was easily accomplished; Admiral Montagu, with six sail of the line and four frigates protected the convoy to Cape Finisterre, and then, by Lord Howe's direction, cruised

* Letter of Gouverneur Morris to Edmund Randolph—Life, vol. ii. p. 434.

from Cape Ortegal to the latitude of Belleisle, retaking ten sail of Guernsey and Jersey vessels, which had fallen into the hands of the enemy; while Captain Laforey, in the Carysfort frigate, made prize of the *Castor*, a vessel of much superior force, seeking to escape from Admiral Montagu. Conceiving that there was little probability of falling in with the convoy, the Admiral abstained from pursuit; but, keeping the same latitude in which they were said to cruise, preserved a situation which promised to enable him to intercept them, should the wind, which was easterly, continue to blow from the same quarter, or, if necessary, to reinforce Lord Howe.

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11th.

Before this arrangement was announced to him, that commander had detached two frigates to look into Brest; and, on receiving information that the French squadron was still in port, steered for the track of the expected West India fleet. Returning to Brest after a fortnight, he found that the French had sailed some days before; he could obtain no accurate account of their strength, or the course they had steered; but they were not long separated.

5th to the 19th.
Proceedings of
Lord Howe.

It is said, that, when the French discovered the British fleet, the caution of St. André was over-borne by the eagerness of his men, and he gave orders for action*. A partial engagement took place, in which *La Révolutionnaire*, of one hundred and ten guns, was resolutely attacked by the *Audacious*, of seventy-four, and both sustained great damage; the Frenchman struck his colours; but the *Audacious* could not take possession; they parted from their fleets together; and the place of the *Révolutionnaire* was supplied by a French ship named *l'Audacieux*, of seventy-four guns, which continued Villaret's fleet twenty six sail, while the British Commander had only twenty-five, with a great inferiority of metal†. The ensuing day, another partial encounter took place, in which the French line was broken; but no material consequence ensued, except the disabling of some vessels on each side.

May 28.
Encounter of
the two fleets.

29th.

* Thiers, tome vi. p. 311.

† The French had 1290 guns, the English 1012.

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June 1.
General en-
gagement.

Those of the French were dismissed to their own ports, and replaced by a squadron under Admiral Neuilly; so that they still presented twenty-six sail of the line, in perfect condition.

A thick fog, which facilitated this junction, prevailed during three days, and prevented the action from being decisive: but at length the sun appeared in all its splendour; the engagement became general, and terminated most gloriously for Britain. In the night each side had made preparations. On the part of the English, it is observed, all was order, activity, stillness; while the enemy gave themselves up to the clamorous hilarity inspired by their expectations of certain success*. At an early hour in the morning, each ship in either fleet was separately opposed by another, as they could be brought into action; the main effort of the English Admiral was to break the line of the enemy, which, after an hour's unintermitted, most severe fighting, was completely effected; the French Admiral gave way, and was followed by all the ships in the van, whose condition enabled them to carry sail, leaving ten or twelve dismasted, crippled, and surrounded by the English; part were brought off by those which had been less damaged in the action; but seven ultimately remained in possession of Lord Howe, though one of them sunk before it could reach a British harbour. The *Vengeur*, a seventy-four, went to the bottom during the action.

Defeat of the
French.

16th.

Their accounts
of the battle.

In reporting these events to the Convention, Barrère treated the whole event as a victory; exulting on the safe arrival of the long-expected convoy, of which, if he exaggerated the value, he could not the importance; he affirmed that the English was superior to the French fleet by fourteen sail of the line, that ten had been dismasted in the action, and three had foundered. He palliated the disaster which he could not entirely conceal, by saying they had left seven dismantled ships at sea, which he feared were lost. Jean Bon St. André was somewhat more moderate in his report, but grossly exaggerated the numbers of the British fleet;

* Lacrételle, tome xii. p. 259.

and both concurred in a story equally false and improbable, respecting the *Vengeur*, the crew of which, as they asserted, sunk into the deep with the tri-coloured standard flying, and with republican shouts and songs, refusing all aid from the victors. This statement is in every respect the reverse of true; the British was substituted for the republican ensign, no songs were uttered, nor any cries but those of anguish and solicitation for aid; the crew spread themselves over the sides and rigging, imploring assistance, and the numbers who sprang on board the boats sent to their assistance menaced the destruction of the British sailors employed in the office of humanity. It was even a remarkable circumstance, that many individuals of the crew of *Le Vengeur* enlisted in a royalist regiment raised by Count D'Hervilly*.

In England, this brilliant achievement produced a general and unalloyed exultation. The noble Admiral, in his dispatches, rendered ample justice to the bravery and discipline of his officers and men, and spoke in terms of manly sorrow of those who had fallen, particularly of Captain Montagu.

In the House of Lords, a vote of thanks to the Admiral, and of acknowledgment to the officers and crews, was proposed by Lord Grenville; and, in the House of Commons, Mr. Dundas added to a similar motion an address to the King, praying that a monument in Westminster Abbey might be erected to the memory of Captain Montagu: the members of opposition in either house adding in forcible terms their testimony of gratitude and applause to the heroes of their country. The Duke of Bedford, Earl of Lauder-

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13th.
Parliament
votes thanks
and honours to
Lord Howe
and his officers
and crews.
16th.

* *Gazettes*, *Moniteur*, *Annual Register*, vol. xxxvi. p. 377 to 380.—Thiers, tome vi. p. 310.—Lacréteille, tome xii. p. 256.—Barrow's *Life of Earl Howe*, cc. 7 and 8, and Mr. Rose's *Naval History of the late War*, p. 158 to 185, in both which, all the proceedings of the fleets and all the manœuvres of the action are detailed with the utmost precision. Mr. Rose, who was too well informed to be deceived, refutes the absurd fiction of Barrère; but shews in his whole narrative that the bravery displayed by the French did not require the embellishments of falsehood. On the sinking of *Le Vengeur*, he particularly commemorates two French officers, who, far from betraying anxiety to avail themselves of any means of safety, continued walking up and down the stern gallery, apparently engaged in conversation, while the ship, heeling, and gradually sinking deeper and deeper, at length admitted the water into her ports, then righted for a moment, and was immediately ingulphed. Barrère's fable was so agreeable to the Convention, that they passed a decree that a model of *Le Vengeur* should be hung up in the Pantheon.

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dale, and Mr. Fox, did not forget to express their hopes that ministers would use this victory for the salutary purpose of procuring peace. On this point, Lord Sydney most properly observed, that he thought this victory tended very much to peace ; but that peace was to be made, not by abandoning the war, but by fighting our enemies by sea and land ; not by making a false estimate of our own strength, or that of our adversary, but by following the example of the gallant Commander. The personal merits of Lord Howe, in the last two wars, were amply displayed by the Duke of Grafton ; and the Duke of Clarence, with the energy of a sailor and the dignity of a prince, declared his confidence in the skill and steadiness of the British seamen, pronouncing this to be the greatest action of which the country could boast. Honorary medals were afterward conferred on the Admiral and his captains*.

18th.
Praises and
benefactions of
the City,

and Ports-
mouth.

Illumination.

Royal visit to
Spithead.

June 26.

The Common Council of London voted their thanks to the victorious Admiral, with the freedom of the City, to be presented in a gold box, and added a donation of five hundred pounds to a fund formed by the merchants of London for relief of petty officers and private seamen who had been wounded, and the widows and orphans of those who had fallen. The corporation of Portsmouth also presented their freedom to the noble Commander ; and a general illumination during three successive nights denoted the joy and satisfaction of the inhabitants of the metropolis, and of most other towns and cities throughout the kingdom†.

In compliment to the brave defenders of the realm, His Majesty, with the Queen, three of the younger Princesses, and Prince Ernest, visited Lord Howe at Spithead, and delivered to him a magnificent sword,

* Annual Register, vol. xxxviii. p. *61. Captain Anthony James Pye Molloy alone was excluded from a share in these honours : he was found guilty (28th April, 1795), by a court martial, of not having duly brought up his ship, nor crossed the enemy's line, and sentenced to be dismissed from the command of his ship, the Corsair.

† The events and transactions above recorded are taken from all the historical and periodical works, and the Gazettes ; the motions in Parliament, and the proceedings in the City and elsewhere, together with Lord Howe's answers to the addresses which were presented to him, were collected in a pamphlet, intitled *Official Correspondence, &c.* published by Debrett.

set with diamonds, together with the medals struck for the occasion to him and to the other admirals and captains who had shared in the glorious action. During a stay of five days, His Majesty held a levee, and personally inspected the fleet; his gracious behaviour and his benevolent and patriotic sentiments captivated all hearts, and carried to the highest pitch of enthusiasm the feeling of loyalty and affection with which his subjects in general, but the naval portion in particular, were so generally animated*.

An armament, under the command of Admiral Sir John Jervis and Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Grey, dispatched to make conquests in the West Indies, arrived, after some delay, in Carlisle Bay, in Barbadoes. The troops were divided into three brigades; the first commanded by Lieutenant-General Prescott, the second by Major-General Thomas Dundas, and the third was to be under the orders of Major-General Prince Edward, afterward Duke of Kent; but, till the arrival of the Prince from Canada, was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Charles Gordon. They were strengthened by detachments of seamen and marines.

On their arrival at Martinique, a proclamation to the inhabitants, by the General and Admiral, described the miseries brought on the islands by the tyranny and misrule of the assembly calling itself the National Convention of France, invited all friends of peace, government, religion, and order, to set the island free from the horrors of anarchy, by having recourse to the protection of a just and beneficent sovereign; and solemnly promising to those who should submit, the full and immediate enjoyment of their lawful possessions, conformably to their ancient laws and customs: they who should oppose would be treated as enemies, and exposed to all consequent evils and calamities. As General Rochambeau had promised freedom to those slaves who would take up arms for the defence of the island, and as it was not possible to distinguish

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Force sent to
the West
Indies.

Feb. 5 to 10.
Conquest of
Martinique.

* For a circumstantial and beautiful description of the incidents attending this visit, see a Letter from Lady Mary Howe to her Sister, Lady Altamont (2 July, 1794), Barrow's Life of Earl Howe, p. 280.

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"those brigands" from people of colour born free, or legally released from slavery, all people of that description found armed, or who, having fought, should have escaped the British bayonets, were to be treated as slaves, transported to the coast of Africa, and abandoned to their fate*.

Three landings were made, each at a distance from the other, for the purpose of distracting the enemy's attention, and alarming him in all his quarters; one near La Trinité, on the north-east side of the island, by a division under Major-General Dundas and Commodore Thompson; another on the south-east coast, near Trois Rivières, St. Lucie, and Cul-de-sac Marin, under Sir Charles Grey and Lieutenant-General Prescott; a third to leeward, at Cas de Navires, under Sir Charles Gordon. After a brave defence, made by General Rochambeau, at every point and fort, the French were finally obliged to capitulate, and the whole island was surrendered†.

10th.
and of Saint
Lucie,
and LesSaintes

Saint Lucie was captured without any considerable resistance, and the British commanders, in their way to Guadaloupe, took possession of Les Saintes, a cluster of small islands between that colony and Dominica.

April 11.
Capture of
Guadaloupe.

Guadaloupe was defended with greater firmness. A landing was effected in the bay of Point-à-Pitre, under the fire of Fort Fleur d'Épée and a three-gun battery at Grozier. This division of the island, named Grande Terre, is separated from Basse Terre, the other district, by an arm of the sea, called La Rivière Salée. The capital of Grande Terre is Point-à-Pitre. The force put on shore consisted of regulars, marines, and seamen. Three more divisions, commanded by Prince Edward, General Dundas, and Colonel Symes, were appointed for the attack of Fort Fleur d'Épée; the outposts were driven in, and the sides of the hill on which the fort is situated covered by the assailants,

* See the proclamation and supplement, Rivington's Annual Register, vol. xxxvi. p. 471.

† Ample and interesting details are given in Rose's Naval History, p. 100 to 118; and in an Account of the Campaign in the West Indies in 1794, by the Rev. Cooper Willyams, chaplain of the Boyne, from which work Mr. Rose derived much of his information.

who pushed forward with swords, half pikes, and unloaded muskets, and scrambled up the acclivity, under an incessant shower of grape and musketry. Some of the sailors leaped in at the embrasures, driving the enemy before them; while the soldiers forced the gates, and fell pell mell on the garrison. After a gallant defence, victory decided in favour of the English, who, heated by the contest, put many to the sword: some escaped through the embrasures, or leaped over the walls, in the hope of gaining Point-à-Pitre; but from this place they were also driven, and pursued to the harbour, where they embarked, and gained Basse Terre, before a force detached from the fleet could intercept them.

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The Quebec and the other frigates, with the transports, crossed over to the other side of the bay; Prince Edward's grenadiers and light infantry, with a party of sailors under Captain Rogers, were landed in Basse Terre, at the village of Petit Bourg. Other divisions, under Lieutenant-Colonel Coote, Sir Charles Grey, and Major-General Dundas, took several forts and posts, until they gained the town of Basse Terre, which, on their approach, was burnt by the inhabitants. Further resistance being impracticable, General Collet surrendered Guadaloupe and its dependencies, on condition of being conveyed, with his garrison, to France. They engaged not to serve against England or her allies during the war; but, on the very night after their surrender, a plan formed by them for rising and murdering the English was detected, and defeated by General Dundas*.

14th to 20th.

On the capture of Martinique, orders were issued, requiring all persons, whether French or foreigners, in the town of St. Pierre, who had in their possession colonial produce or provisions of any kind, on pain of imprisonment and confiscation, to deliver at head quarters, on the following morning, a declaration of their amount, with the place of their deposit, and the names of their proprietors. This mandate not having been

Orders and
proclamations
of the British
Commanders.

April 26.

* From Rose's Naval History, p. 118 et seqq.

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Jervis published a proclamation, ordering the inhabitants of St. Pierre to deliver, within two days, an exact specification of the productions of the colony, then actually existing in their hands, for which they were to remain answerable. A general sale was announced; they who were guilty of concealing goods would be severely punished, and they who had sold any were to render, without delay, an account of the sums they had received.

10th.

General Prescott had previously put forth a proclamation, desiring the colonists to assemble for the purpose of electing fit persons to represent them in a meeting with commissioners named by the Commander-in-chief, and to confer with them on the most equitable and expeditious means of raising a sum of money, adequate to the value of the conquest, destined to reward the valour, to compensate the excessive sufferings and fatigues, and consequent sickness and mortality, and to make good the heavy expense incurred by the British officers, soldiers, and sailors, who, with unshaken firmness and matchless perseverance, had achieved the conquest of the island, subjected it to British government, rescued from a wretched rule the greatest number of the inhabitants, and restored them to the quiet possession of their property, the confiscation of which had already been decreed.

May 21.

Such were the terms, far more pompous and florid than he had used, in which Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, in a new proclamation of their own, recited that of General Prescott. To remove the ill effects which had already been occasioned by delay, they "enacted and ordained" that the civil commissioners, each in his respective parish, should deliver, as soon as possible, exact lists of the habitations, number of slaves, cattle, acres of land, buildings, and plantations, with an estimate of their value; and a similar return was required in towns; with a demand of the ledgers and other commercial books, deeds, and securities, belonging to the captains or agents of the French trade, all sorts of property falling under the description of vacant possession, and all effects belonging to

individuals who had fallen during the siege, or who resided in France. Persons delaying or refusing to furnish the required information, so that a return might be made in ten days, were to be specially reported; for the Commanders-in-chief, having manifested their ardent wish to adopt the mildest course, declared that if the present measure were not fully executed, they would order and enforce a general confiscation*.

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Reinforcements having arrived from England, Sir Charles Grey, according to the discretionary power confided to him, dispatched the twenty-second, twenty-third, and forty-first regiments, excepting their flank companies, under the command of General Whyte, to St. Domingo, hoping, with the assistance of a squadron of one seventy-four, two sixty-fours, a fifty-gun ship, three frigates, and three sloops, under Commodore Ford, to take Port-au-Prince, their capital, and subdue all the French portion of the island. Permanently to assure this effect by the operation of an invading army, was beyond reasonable expectation; and the succour of any portion of the inhabitants was little to be relied on. Rooted hatred between the different classes, claims of proprietorship maintained by the whites and free people of colour, resolutely resisted by the emancipated slaves, and the unmitigated fury arising from differences of political opinion, rendered their enmity to each other deadly, and produced dreadful scenes of conflagration, plunder, murder, and every violence; while the Spaniards also had made some conquests, particularly Tiburon and Leogane.

Feb. 19.
Attack on St.
Domingo.

To act against Port-au-Prince, our troops proceeded to attack Fort Bissoton. They were disembarked from the Fly sloop, while the Penelope, the Belliqueux, and the Sceptre, judiciously stationed, aided in assaulting the fort; and the Europa and the Irresistible completed the blockade. A feeble fire was kept up from the fort, and the French colours continued to fly,

March 31.

* These denunciations, extraordinary in their form and appearance, are thus accurately stated, because they became the subject of many petitions and much discussion in Parliament. Rivington's Annual Register, vol. xxxvi. p. 471 et seqq.

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June 3.

June.
Arrival of
Victor Hugues
at Guadaloupe.

when, during a tremendous deluge of rain and a crash of thunder, Captain Daniel, with sixty men, stormed and carried the works. An attack was meditated against the remaining posts; but the enemy evacuated the town, without executing the plan they had previously arranged for burning the ships in the harbour*.

However important might be the consequences expected from the expedition, the absence of the troops employed in it was strikingly injurious to the conquerors of Guadaloupe. Most unexpectedly to them, a French squadron of two frigates, two forty-fours armed en flute, and two transports, arrived at Grande Terre. They conveyed about fifteen hundred troops; but, their General dying soon after his arrival, they were under the sole command of Victor Hugues, a missionary from the Convention, who soon made himself horribly celebrated. Active and daring, he was seldom deterred by difficulty or checked by prudent consideration; he never thought any effusion of blood too great a price for a victory, or considered the possible ultimate consequences of a plan, provided the immediate result be favourable. Cursed with a delight in carnage, he retained his ferocity and cruelty, even under circumstances which soften the most furious passions; yet he was sometimes seized with desultory fits of humanity, and often, from caprice, treated those of his prisoners with most regard who shewed the least respect for him.

June 3.
His successful
progress.

At the period of Victor Hugues's arrival, General Thomas Dundas was expiring, a sacrifice to the yellow fever, which had also made dreadful ravages among the troops; and the people of Guadaloupe, whether from natural fickleness, contempt of their small force, or distrust in their promises, were generally disaffected toward the English. The French, on their landing, were joined by great numbers of the people of colour,

* Rose, p. 127. But for copious information on facts respecting the affairs of St. Domingo in general, see Malouet sur les Colonies, and Rapport sur les Troubles de St. Domingue, fait à la Convention Nationale, par J. P. Garran Coulon, printed, in four volumes, 8vo. in 1799. Also Bryan Edwards; M. De Charmilly; Account of the Black Empire of Hayti, by Marcus Rainsford; and other histories.

while many royalists abandoned the English standard, carried Fort Fleur d'Epée, and Point-à-Pitre, being considered untenable, was evacuated.

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Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis received intelligence of these disasters while at St. Christopher's, preparing to sail for England; they immediately repaired to Guadaloupe, and fought several gallant, though ineffectual, actions, in hope of recovering Grande Terre. With a force so inadequate, their valour was fruitless; they had no reason for expecting a speedy reinforcement; and the concentration of their diminutive army was prevented by the necessity of protecting the smaller islands, where insurrection generally prevailed.

8th.

With such troops as were at his command, Sir Charles Grey besieged Fleur d'Epée, gained possession of St. Ann's Fort, and defeated a strong detachment of Republicans in two attempts to surprise Morne Mascot; but fatigue, disease, the commencement of the rainy season, and the approach of the hurricane months, impelled him to attempt finishing the campaign by one decisive effort to storm Fleur d'Epée. The plan was well and judiciously formed, but failed through some misunderstanding of the directions, with the tremendous loss in killed, wounded, and missing, of thirty-eight officers, forty-three non-commisioned, and six hundred and eleven privates. The General re-embarked his artillery, and strengthened his posts at Basse Terre, intending, if reinforcements arrived, to renew his efforts against Point-à-Pitre and Fleur d'Epée after the hurricane season; in the mean time he retired to Martinique, where a party of coloured banditti, unchecked by a sufficient force, had commenced terrible depredations.

29th.

July 1.

At Guadaloupe the scene was daily becoming more dismal and hopeless: the head quarters were judiciously chosen at Berville, near Basse Terre; but the climate and the neighbouring swamps increased the infection which thinned the troops; and the yellow fever and other disorders raged with such violence, that, during the month of August, the sick composed a great ma-

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1794.

October 4.

jority in the camp. Two frigates and two sloops of war, stationed off the island for the purpose, could not, with all their vigilance, prevent the conveyance of supplies to the French from America, and disaffected circumjacent islands. Victor Hugues found his numbers daily augmented by flocks of negroes and mulattoes, while the English were unable to furnish guards for their different batteries. In a dark night, the French embarked a strong detachment at Point-à-Pitre and Fort Louis, and, eluding the British shipping, effected two separate landings in Basse Terre. Every exertion was made to fortify the camp at Berville; but the numbers and determination of the French prevailed, and the commander, General Graham, was obliged to accept terms of capitulation.* The British officer vainly essayed to include the French royalists in the articles; his humanity could save only twenty-five, whom he sent in a covered boat on board the *Boyne*, while three hundred, who fell into the hands of their countrymen, were sacrificed without remorse. Fifty fell by the guillotine; the remainder were tied together, placed on the brink of the trenches they had so valiantly defended, and fired on by the rawest recruits: the weight of the killed and wounded drew those who were unhurt into the trench, which was, by throwing in of earth, immediately converted into a grave for the living as well as the dead.

Toward Basse Terre, the only place remaining in the hands of the English, Victor Hugues directed his overwhelming force, burning, in his way, the beautiful seats of the royalists, and laying waste their plantations. Sir John Jervis and General Prescott used their utmost exertions to defend the town, though without much hope of success, as their troops were still diminishing, and the royalists and militia refused to act, or deserted to the enemy. Under all these disadvantages, the de-

* The terms were, that the garrison should march out with the honours of war, and be sent in French ships to England, within twenty-one days after the surrender, under the condition of not serving against the French during the remainder of the war. This last condition was not observed, as the enemy broke their part of the agreement, by detaining the garrison in prison for more than a year, during which time many of them died.

fence was continued for more than a month; but the Republicans, gaining the eminences, were enabled to fire on the shipping, and prevent them from rendering the wonted assistance. Victor Hugues had summoned the Fort, but received a resolute answer of defiance, when a reinforcement arrived from England in the *Majestic*, the *Theseus*, and the *Bellona*. Sir Charles Grey, worn down with fatigue and impaired in health, resigned his command to Sir John Vaughan; and Sir John Jervis, from the same causes, yielded his to Vice-Admiral Caldwell.

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November 6.

14th.

27th.

The reinforcements from England were insufficient to resist the Republicans; and the Fort, being reduced almost to ruins, was necessarily evacuated; especially, as the troops were wanted to defend other islands where the mortality had been no less dreadful than in Guadaloupe. The evacuation was planned and executed with judgment and secrecy; between four and five hundred men were embarked for *Les Saintes*, *Antigua*, and *Martinique*, without loss or accident, by eleven o'clock at night, while the French were so completely ignorant of their intention, that they continued their cannonade till two in the ensuing morning. Victor Hugues used his victories with the utmost brutality, and, among other unmilitary and unmanly acts, demolished the tomb of General Dundas, dug up his body, and threw it into the river *Galion**; he also employed the British prisoners, officers as well as privates, in the most severe and degrading labours†.

Guadaloupe
evacuated.

December 10.

* Hay's View of the Insurrection in Grenada, p. 94.

† From Rose's Naval History of the War, and Wiliams's Account of the Campaign in the West Indies.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH.

1794—1795.

State of England.—Dangerous riots—at Charing-cross—in Whitcombe-street.—Recruiting houses destroyed—Falseness of the charges.—Effects of the riots.—Views of the instigators.—Difficulty of Government.—Prosecutions in Scotland.—Trial of Watt—of Downie.—Sentences.—Conduct of Watt.—Observations.—Prosecution in Ireland—in England.—Thomas Walker's case.—Pop-gun plot.—Special Commission in London.—Charge of Sir James Eyre.—Prisoners arraigned—the Indictment.—Trial of Thomas Hardy.—Opening of the Attorney-General.—Adjournment. Application of Mr. Erskine.—Evidence.—Mr. Erskine's defence.—Evidence for the prisoner.—Mr. Gibbs—Solicitor-General in reply.—Summing-up.—Hardy acquitted.—Trial of John Horne Tooke.—Opening of the Solicitor-General.—Defence by Mr. Erskine.—Evidence.—Acquittal.—Discharge of several other prisoners.—Trial of John Thelwall, who is acquitted—Other prisoners discharged—Observations.

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1794.
State of
England.

EXEMPT from the pressure of hostile conflict, and the fear of invasion, the people of Great Britain were agitated only by the struggles of party and the efforts of foes to the constitution. Those who, to use their own metaphor, made it a principle in their opposition to clog the wheels of government, were at once aided and embarrassed by associations formed, not only to clog the wheels, but to overthrow the vehicle. If the individuals composing these societies were generally of humble condition or even of disreputable life, they had among them some persons of good family, of academic education, of considerable ability, and of respectable station in the trading and literary community.

These were selected specimens rather than a general description ; but whatever deductions might be made from their claims to personal consideration, the ardour of young members, the malignity of some of their leading movers, the extent of their correspondence, and the audacity of their assumptions, were calculated to animate exertion on the one hand, and, on the other, to extort the consideration which proceeds from fear. In vain did the society called Friends of the People, and the respectable members of the opposition party, disclaim their assertions and repel their advances ; the societies seized on the strongest passages in their most violent speeches, magnified all their complaints of malversation in government, misconduct in war and finance, their censures on our allies, and their vindications of our enemies ; and while they heartily re-echoed every assertion that our constitution was violated, they went further, and, relying on their oracles, Paine and the Jacobins of France, maintained that we had no constitution, or that what we pretended so to denominate was in all particulars vicious and faulty, unfit for free and enlightened men, and, like the old system of France, fit only to be destroyed. Their obsequious adherence to French principles, and their applause of all the excesses that flowed from them, formed a strange instance of perverse depravity. Their congratulations on the invasion of the Tuileries were not restrained by the massacres of September : nor were their admission of some conspicuous regicides as honorary members, and the introduction of their ferocious harangues on their records withdrawn, when they saw the catastrophe and the cruelties to which they led the way. When successive factions hunted each other to destruction, that which prevailed obtained the undiminished approbation of these reformers, who were always ready to extol the condition of the French, while, with equal perseverance, and in spite of daily experience, they vituperated every act of the English government. Thus, while prisons for state offenders were multiplied in Paris, and thousands incarcerated in all parts of the republic, they stigmatized the prisons, to which persons

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charged with high treason were consigned, as Bastiles : while the levy-en-masse, the requisition and the maximum, deprived all men in France of every claim to liberty and property, they extolled those measures, but poured forth furious denunciations against the means by which the army and navy of England were recruited : while the streets of Paris were defiled with the daily bloodshed of men, women, and children, sent to death for undefined crimes, these acts were regarded as mere necessary means for the support of a free government ; but the transporting of a small number, after a full trial, on the clearest evidence, and the detention of a few others, while arrangements were effected for bringing them to trial, were denounced as horrible exercises of tyranny, and unpardonable invasions of the rights of man.

Dangerous
riots.

If the instructions and persuasions of these parties were insufficient to rally around them any great portion of influential, or even respectable, persons, they gave themes and promised a centre to those whom discontent predisposed to mischief ; whom want or disgrace rendered reckless, or who hoped, from any kind of change, to advance fortunes which could not be much depressed. Hence, what had been only mobs, or at most riots, assumed the appearance of insurrections ; and assemblages, which in other times would have dispersed at the voice of a magistrate and the approach of a constable, required now the presence and exertions of the military.

August 15.
At Charing
Cross.

In an obscure court, near Charing-cross, a young man, named George Howe, threw himself from a window up three pair of stairs, and was killed on the spot. The house, like some others in the neighbourhood, was of infamous character, and the surmise was added, that it was a receptacle of recruits, commonly called a crimping-house. On an inquiry taken before the coroner, the jury returned, that the death was accidental, having occurred while the deceased was endeavouring to escape from illegal confinement in a house of ill-fame. By whom, or for what reason he was detained, did not appear ; but it seems that, on

20th.

an application by Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Grey, an investigation took place at the police-office in Queen Square, when it appeared that Howe was violently insane, and had met with some harsh and improper treatment; but nothing was disclosed tending to criminate the mistress of the house, or a recruiting serjeant, who had been brought before the magistrates. Before the verdict, or even the investigation, mobs, collected in the neighbourhood, demolished the inside of the house in which Howe had been detained, and damaged several others. A picket guard was called out, whom the populace assailed with stones; the soldiers, with honourable forbearance, abstained from using their arms, but cleared the streets.

A new impulse was given to their fury by an extraordinary circumstance; one which, connected with the existing tumults, exciting in some minds a suspicion that a clandestine and unexplored combination existed and governed the transaction. One Edward Barrett was brought to Banbury by two men in the recruiting service, as duly enlisted and attested. On being presented, he complained that he had been made drunk by two recruiting officers, inveigled into a house called the White Horse in Whitcomb-street, compelled to sign an attestation, and robbed of a silver watch, a pair of silver buckles, and other property. The commanding officer immediately sent the two men accused to town in custody; an examination took place before Sir William Addington, at Bow-street, and, on the positive deposition of Barrett, the accused were committed for trial, but afterwards admitted to bail.

Regular investigation or legal proceedings were too tardy for those who preferred violence to justice, or those by whom they were instigated; the White Horse was immediately destroyed, and the mob proceeded to wreak vengeance on other houses kept for the recruiting service in Holborn, Barbican, Clerkenwell, and various other parts of the town. Some house-keepers defended their dwellings with fire-arms, by which innocent persons were injured; the Lord Mayor

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16th.

19th.

18th.
In Whitcomb-
street.

Recruiting
houses
destroyed.

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made the proclamation directed by the riot act, and the military were called out ; but the mob shifted the scene of their attempts as often as they perceived the probability of effectual resistance. By prudence and vigilance, the extreme use of military force was rendered unnecessary: the proclamation of the Lord Mayor and the exertions of the Volunteer Association protected the city ; and after keeping the metropolis in a state of agitation for a week, during which, but for the temper and firmness which were displayed, the scenes of 1780 might have been renewed, the riot subsided*.

Falschhood of
the charges.

September 24.

The further results of these movements shewed the wickedness with which they had been excited, and proved that some latent contrivance had been employed. Barrett's complaint came on to be tried at the Old Bailey. His interests were protected by a very able and experienced advocate, and he related circumstantially the manner of his inveiglement, detention, robbery, and the compulsion under which he signed the pretended attestation. Witnesses for the defence proved that, at the time of his supposed captivity, he was at large, living in dissipation and drunkenness ; a recruiting serjeant and one of his men deposed that he had enlisted with them, but he had neither watch nor buckles ; a dealer in clothes stated that he had bought of the prosecutor his own habiliments at the White Horse, where he had put on military apparel ; and a magistrate of the Police-office in Queen Square and his clerk proved that he had been duly and regularly attested in their presence ; some other facts were disclosed, and counsel were preparing to corroborate and extend the testimony, when the jury, declaring themselves perfectly satisfied, requested the learned judge to spare himself the trouble of summing up, pronounced a verdict of acquittal, and the prosecutor was taken into custody to be tried for perjury.

* From the chronicle in the Annual Register, and the principal occurrences in the New Annual Register, 1794. In the historical portion of the latter work, p. 264, the compiler has relied on and transcribed an inflamed and incorrect account given by Mr. Plowden, in his Short History of the last Twenty Months, p. 256.

In the Common Council, thanks were voted to the Lord Mayor and the City Association, for their prompt and judicious exertions; some of the rioters taken in the act of demolishing dwelling-houses were convicted and underwent the penalty of the law, and a ward rate and county rate were levied to make compensation for the property destroyed.

However insignificant these transactions may appear from their general results, many persons believed that they were the fruit of a plan, the termination of which was a great disappointment to the projectors. In the publications of the societies, and the speeches uttered at their meetings, war was decried as a departure from the principles of religion and social happiness; and a fast which had been ordered by government, to implore the aid and protection of the Almighty in our behalf, was treated as an impious and intolerable mockery. It was therefore suggested, that to obstruct the recruiting service by raising a popular feeling against it, would have been most desirable, and the attempt, although unsuccessful, not badly arranged. Had Barrett's complaint been investigated by the military commander at Banbury, its falsehood detected, and he summarily punished, or sent on foreign service, anathemas against military oppression, and the sufferings of "poor Barrett," would have resounded throughout the realm. The prudence of the commanding officer, who remitted this complaint to the proper tribunal, averted this evil consequence; and the only result was, the disquiet occasioned in London, and the mischief so rashly done, and so dearly expiated.

Before, as well as after the arrests for seditious or treasonable practices in London, the attention of the public had been fixed on the proceedings, both in England and Scotland, against individuals charged with offences and combinations, extending from high treason down to inflammatory publications and seditious expressions. In this portion of their duty, the situation of the advisers of the Crown was peculiarly difficult. Had they left unnoticed the assemblages, publications, and speeches of those who sought to

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riots.

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views of the
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Difficulty of
Government.

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agitate the realm, they would have been deemed responsible for an abstinence from timely and vigorous exertions. If they prosecuted many, they were represented as making a rigorous war on public opinion; if only a few, the individuals were pointed out as selected martyrs, and elevated into unexpected importance; if they assailed them on the first display of their malignity, censure followed, on the ground of a too impetuous zeal for persecution; if they delayed, the observation was, that, by permitting, they had encouraged the diffusion of sedition and the formation of dangerous societies; and every instance of forbearance was cited as a proof that the offender had been encouraged by the impunity of himself and others, and that not the general welfare, but some particular view, directed their proceeding. It will not be necessary to refer to all these proceedings; but a few must necessarily be mentioned.

August 14.
Prosecutions
in Scotland.

Trial of Watt.

When the prosecutions of the preceding year had destroyed the British Convention in Edinburgh, private societies were formed, which were more numerous and better attended. In consequence of information respecting these meetings, a bill of indictment for high treason was found against Robert Watt and David Downie, who, at their own desire, were arraigned separately. On the trial of Watt, and in a paper of confession which he wrote after its termination, it appeared, that, although the society in Edinburgh took the name of Friends of the People, they were in correspondence, not with that association in London, but with the corresponding and constitutional societies, and that the missives and resolves of each body were equally daring, inflammatory, and hostile to the established government. They professed to pursue a reform of the House of Commons, on the basis of universal suffrage and annual election. With societies in London and with persons in Ireland a conspiracy was formed for establishing a new British Convention, and introducing a revolution on the French plan, indifferent to its consequent anarchy.

To conduct their operations, committees of general

union were formed, and one of more importance, denominated the Committee of Ways and Means, which was private, and composed of seven members, among whom Watt was a conspicuous leader, and Downie treasurer; but two of the seven, alarmed, or not approving the projects disclosed, soon discontinued their attendance. This committee was armed with unlimited and unrestrained authority over those who directly or indirectly concurred in their nomination; for one of the avowed principles of the society was, that as representatives, this committee was invested with every power appertaining to their constituents. They could dispose of the money collected, under whatever pretence, without responsibility or control. Their correspondence led them to expect a general convention of representatives of England, Scotland, and Ireland, at a central place, the name of which was not disclosed, and a simultaneous rising in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh, which should enable them to command the King to dismiss his ministers and make peace with France, or abide the consequences. To further these projects, attempts were made to create a mutiny among the troops, by persuading them to resist employment on foreign service: addresses were circulated and missionaries employed in all parts of Scotland, who made flattering reports of the disposition of the people. Secret orders were given for the fabrication of large numbers of pikes to arm the people. According to the disclosure afterwards made by Watt, it was planned that, when the day of insurrection should come, a body of men, to the number of four or five thousand, armed with pikes, guns, and grenades, properly divided, with proper leaders, should be so placed in and near Edinburgh, that, when the Castle soldiers came out, they might be surrounded; means were to be used to gain over as many of the military as possible; the regiment was to be enticed out by companies; but, previously, the magistrates, the lords of justiciary, commander-in-chief, and many others, were to be apprehended and detained until the mind of the ensuing Convention, or rather Parliament, was

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known. It was not intended to inflict death on any; but those found guilty of oppression and injustice to the patriots were to share their fate, transportation. The soldiers were to be allured from the Castle by means of a letter, either signed by the Lord Provost or the Commander-in-Chief, previously in custody, ordering the Commandant to send a company, without any ammunition, to a fire that was to be kindled in St. Andrew's Square: these were to be secured and disarmed, and the remainder to be drawn out by similar fires kindled in succession in other quarters of the city. Should these expedients fail, they were to be compelled to surrender by the interception of victuals, the incarceration of the Commander-in-Chief, and the influence of a party among themselves favouring the plan. The public offices and the banks were to be secured by sentinels, until the appearance of the proprietors and managers, when the property of persons, either in town or country, deemed, by persons selected for the investigation, inimical to liberty, in the hands of bankers, was to be sealed up, and only an allowance necessary for their maintenance afforded until their fate was decided; and the post-office was to be secured. All these things were expected to be achieved in Edinburgh, London, and Dublin, on the same night. Couriers were then to be dispatched to leaders in other parts of the country, while troops were to be marched from designated places, to assist where necessary. Proclamations, previously prepared, were then to be issued, enjoining land-holders, and officers under Government who did not cordially unite with the patriots, not to go above three miles from their dwelling places, on pain of death; and, under the like penalty, farmers were not to conceal or export grain; ship-masters not to carry any person coastways without giving information of the place which passengers came from and were going to, that they might be called to an examination; and those who were authorized to levy men were to deliver up their commissions and recruits to persons to be nominated. An address was preparing to the King, consisting of a

long catalogue of abuses, both in the legislative and executive branches of government; and requiring the dismissal of his present servants and a dissolution of Parliament, to be replaced by men in whom the people could confide.

A professional gentleman, afterward a splendid luminary in the literary hemisphere, who was present at this trial, speaks of it as displaying the most atrocious and deliberate plan of villany which had occurred in the annals of Great Britain. The equivocations and perjury of the witnesses (most of them being accomplices in what they called the great plan) set the abilities of the King's counsel in the most striking point of view*. One observation by the Lord President, in summing up, is eminently deserving of notice. "Some men have affected," he said, "to call themselves the Friends of the People. Friends of the People! If by that term is meant that those assuming it are friends of the whole, that is, friends of the King and of all ranks of men in this country without exception, then it may be allowed that they are good subjects and friends to the constitution; but why they assume to themselves exclusively a name which ought equally to belong to every British subject, one is at a loss to see. If, on the other hand, their affection be only partial; if they come with friendship in the one hand and daggers in the other; if they mean to adopt only one part of the constitution and to reject another, then may it truly be asserted that they are the bitterest enemies the people of this country ever saw†."

On the trial of Downie, his participation in these plans was clearly established. He, like Watt, was found guilty; but the jury, discerning some circumstances of mitigation in his case, recommended him to mercy; therefore, while Watt expiated his crime on the scaffold, his companion obtained a pardon, on condition of transporting himself for life. It appears that

Sept. 5, 6.
Of Downie.

Sentences.

Conduct of
Watt.

* Letter from Walter Scott to Miss Rutherford, 5th September 1794.—
Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, vol. i. p. 219.

† Howell's State Trials, vol. xxiii. p. 1387.

Watt had joined the society called Friends of the People, in Edinburgh, with the intent of being a spy on their proceedings; had written to Mr. Dundas, and communicated with the Lord-Advocate on that footing, endeavouring to induce them to give money to some, who, as he pretended, could make disclosures; but the information which he himself afforded being found untrue, correspondence with him was discontinued*. Whether he was impelled by resentment at this circumstance, or whether his imagination became heated by the encomiums afforded to his associates by the societies in London and Dublin, he espoused with ardour the plans he was at first desirous to subvert, and was the first to move treasonable attempts and addresses†.

Although the guilt of these criminals was fully established and the justice of their conviction undisputed, the public regarded with derision rather than apprehension a plot in which individuals without funds or tried adherents, without military leaders, or the most ordinary means of making or repelling attacks, proposed to create a simultaneous movement in the three capitals of the empire; to seize the banks; to subdue and overpower the constituted authorities; to insult, command, and in effect depose the King; and to murder or banish his officers of state or public adherents. The revolution which, five years before, had been effected in France by men and by means apparently not more powerful, was cited as an instance in support of contrary opinions; but it was omitted to state that mobs there were regularly formed and paid, and that the gardes françoises were already corrupted and devoted to the cause of rebellion. These events and opinions are of importance, as they bear upon the prosecutions intended to be instituted in London, and in preparation for which the leading members of the Constitutional and Corresponding Societies had been for some time detained in custody; and the feelings of

* Howell, vol. xxiii. p. 1328.

† For a detail of the proceedings, see Howell's State Trials, vol. xxiii. p. 1167; vol. xxiv. p. 1.

the nation at large with respect to prosecutions for treason and sedition were of the utmost weight in deciding a great political question.

In other prosecutions, the unimportant successes and mortifying failures of government were alike calculated to occasion in its adversaries the confidence which accrues to partizans in a cause where defeat and victory are equally poised, and the shout of triumph can be made to overpower the cries of discomfiture. Some of the most striking cases may be enumerated without details. In Cork, the Rev. Dennis Driscoll, tried for a libel on the constitution, was acquitted on one and found guilty on another count of the indictment. In Dublin, one Rhab, the printer, and twelve individuals, as proprietors of the newspaper called *The Northern Star*, were prosecuted for a libel; the twelve were acquitted and the printer alone found guilty.

At Leicester, a person named Vaughan was convicted, at the quarter sessions, of publishing a seditious libel, but recommended to mercy, and slightly punished; and at Bath, Benjamin Bull, for selling Paine's *Rights of Man*, was imprisoned a year; not to mention other convictions which took place at sessions for the West Riding of Yorkshire, Rotherham, and some other places. These verdicts were more than counterbalanced, in their effect, by acquittals on the merits; where appeals were made to the juries against the horde of spies and informers who infested coffee-houses and places of public resort, so that Englishmen, exchanging their sentiments with each other, were placed in the power of hirelings, employed to catch any unguarded expression*. Still more was the effect of prosecution impaired, when juries, acting on the recent statute, affirmed by their verdict the fact of uttering the words or issuing the publication imputed, but qualified the effect by denying that the defendant was actuated by any malicious intention; the consequence of which was, a recorded verdict of not guilty. Such instances occurred in many parts of the kingdom; for

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Prosecutions
in Ireland.

April 25.

May 28.

May 1.
In England.

Oct. 9.

* Trial of Warren; Exeter March assizes.

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March.
April 28.
August 8.April 2.
Thomas
Walker's case.

example, at Leicester, in the case of Robert Erpe; at Coventry, in that of Charles Reynolds; and at York, on the trial of George Thompson, a dissenting minister, for publishing a most seditious discourse, which had been delivered under the semblance of a lecture for the fast-day. A blow, much more severe, against these prosecutions, was inflicted by the trial, at Lancaster, of Thomas Walker, who was indicted, with nine others, for a conspiracy against the King and constitution. The conduct and expressions of the parties were of such a description, that no doubt could have been entertained of their guilt; but the whole charge appeared to be a malicious fabrication. A man, named Dunn, the witness called to prove it, was shewn to be utterly unworthy of credit, and was contradicted in many important particulars. The jury acquitted the defendants; the witness, by order of the court, was taken into custody, and afterward convicted of perjury*.

Pop-gun plot.

Sept. 27.

As if to hold up the proceedings of government to the utmost ridicule, information was given of a conspiracy, formed by some obscure and insignificant members of the Corresponding Society, to assassinate the King, by discharging at him, through a tube, some poisoned missile, propelled by breath. On this information, several persons were arrested and examined before the privy council, but not immediately prosecuted. From the first disclosure of the matter to the public, it was received with vociferous derision; and because it was not ultimately found to be true, it was decried as impossible. The examinations before the privy council afforded opportunities to the parties inculpated to make displays of contumacy, and to treat their superiors with disdain. They acquired, besides, the means of strutting for a time before their admirers, as heroes in the fiction of the pop-gun plot. After an imprisonment of considerable duration, the persons apprehended were discharged; and, for the present, the transaction had no further result†.

* Howell's State Trials, vol. xxiii p. 1055.

† For accounts by the parties themselves, see the Pop-gun Plot unravelled, by John Smith, who, on the strength of the event, established, in an obscure

Such were the auspices under which were commenced those trials toward which so much public attention was directed, and on the result of which so much anxiety was felt. In consequence of the reports of the committees, and the arrest of the persons implicated*, a special commission having issued, the judges† named in it assembled at the Session House for the county of Middlesex, and a grand jury having been sworn, Sir James Eyre delivered a charge, which was highly extolled and severely criticised‡.

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Special Commission in London.

A true bill having been returned against Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, John Augustus Bonney, Stewart Kyd, Jeremiah Joyce, Thomas Wardle, Thomas Holcroft, John Richter, Matthew Moore, John Thelwall, Richard Hodgson, and John Baxter§, counsel were assigned to each of them. All concurred in nominating Mr. Erskine and Mr. Gibbs, except Joyce, who fixed on Mr. Felix Vaughan, and Baxter, who named Mr. Gurney. Thomas Holcroft, one of those who had not been in custody, came into court, and, although cautioned against incurring needless captivity, acknowledged himself to be the person indicted,

Prisoners
arraigned.

6th.

7th.

street, a shop for the sale of pamphlets, with the sign of "the Pop-gun;" and a Narrative of his Arrest, Examination, and Imprisonment, by Paul Thomas Lemaistre. To dismiss this subject at once, it may be stated, that, on the 31st of August 1795, Robert Thomas Crossfield, who was reputed the chief of the conspirators, who had been absent from England, and for whose capture a reward had been advertised, was apprehended and examined before the privy council. A bill of indictment for high treason against him, Paul Thomas Lemaistre, John Smith, and George Higgins, was found on the 15th of January following, by the grand jury for the City of London, at the Old Bailey. Crossfield was arraigned on the 11th of May, and, after two days' trial, acquitted. The others, who had voluntarily surrendered, were discharged without further proceeding. Howell's State Trials, vol. xxvi. p. 1

* Vol. v. pp. 603-4, 619, 620.

† They were, Eyre, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; Macdonald, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer; Baron Hotham; and Judges Butler, Grose, and Lawrence.

‡ Beside the animadversions which appeared in the daily papers, a pamphlet, intitled "Cursory Remarks on the Charge," excited considerable interest. It was said, at the time, and it is reasserted by Mr. Alexander Stephens (Life of J. H. Tooke, vol. ii. p. 140), to be the production of William Godwin, author of "Political Justice;" and this assertion was never contradicted by him; but it was evidently above his capacity. Persons who pretended to more knowledge said that it was composed, or at least revised, by Lord Thurlow; but of this there is no satisfactory proof. The compiler of Howell's State Trials asserts (vol. xxiv. p. 240), on what he considers sufficient authority, that it was written by Mr. Felix Vaughan, who was appointed counsel for one of the persons arraigned, and acted as assistant counsel to them all.

§ It was ignored against John Lovett.

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The indictment.

and with the rest pleaded not guilty. The prisoners, who had before been confined in the Tower, were, for the purpose of trial, removed to Newgate.

The indictment, which contained several counts, charged that the prisoners had traitorously conspired to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom, to subvert and alter the established legislature, to depose the King and put him to death, and to excite insurrection, rebellion, and war, within the realm. To effect these purposes, they were accused, first, of meeting, consulting, and agreeing to procure a convention of the King's subjects, who should, in defiance of the authority and against the will of the Parliament, alter the legislature and government, and depose the King. Second—composing and publishing books, pamphlets, and other writings, containing incitements and exhortations to persuade the King's subjects to depute delegates to such a convention. Third and fourth—consulting and deliberating on the times, means, and place, and agreeing to co-operate with other traitors in assembling such convention: and fifth—causing and procuring to be made, and agreeing to the making, of guns, pikes, and axes, to arm divers subjects, that they might oppose and withstand the King in the due and lawful exercise of his authority, subvert and alter the government, and depose the King. There were many counts varying the phraseology; but this was the substance of the charge.

28th.
Trial of Thomas Hardy.

As the prisoners claimed to be tried separately, Thomas Hardy, the person first named in the indictment, was the first against whom the Attorney-General proceeded. He was a man in the middle time of life, by trade a shoe-maker, and had acted as secretary to the Constitutional Society.

Opening of the
Attorney-General.

In opening the case against him, the Attorney-General amply stated the law relative to high treason, the protection which it affords to the Crown, and the jealous care with which it guards the safety of the subject, disavowing all intention of making any charge of constructive, cumulative, or analogous treason, but promising to furnish evidence of overt acts, by which

an intent to depose the King would be established. The convention which the prisoners conspired to call, was intended to assume the character of a convention of the people, claiming, as such, all civil and political authority, proposing to exercise it by altering the government otherwise than by acts of the present constituted legislature, otherwise than by those statutes according to which the King had sworn, at the hazard of his life, to govern. If this were made out, it would necessarily follow, on the part of all who took a step to assemble it, that they were guilty of a conspiracy to depose the King, to deprive him of his constitutional character of sovereign of this kingdom. A conspiracy to call such a meeting, whether it were successful or not, would be an overt act of high treason. If it had been intended to retain in him the name and office of king,—creating, however, by the authority of the intended convention a new legislature to act with him,—if they would allow him to act with them, and thus calling upon him to act against the express obligations of his coronation oath,—it still would be a conspiracy to depose him from his royal authority: if he refused, he must necessarily be deposed from that authority; if he accepted, he was not the king of England, as established by law. But he could not accept; he was sworn not so to govern; he must refuse, must resist, and, in consequence of resisting, his life must be in danger. “The indictment further charges,” the Attorney-General proceeded, “the conspiracy to levy
“active, not constructive, war; which, without ques-
“tion, was an overt act of compassing the King’s
“death. A rising to oblige him to alter his measures
“of government, or to form a representative govern-
“ment, excluding the King entirely, or, without ex-
“cluding him entirely, to compel him by their own
“strength and force to govern with others, and without
“the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled,
“and to substitute, against his will and against the
“will of the present constituted authority of the
“country, another authority, formed on the principles
“of universal suffrage and annual representation,—

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“ either of these would be an overt act of treason, of
“ deposing the King, and therefore of compassing his
“ death.”

If the experience of Europe had not been instructed by what had passed in France, it could not perhaps have been conceived that a project so extensive should have been set on foot by persons in number so few; that a project, existing almost every where, should yet be visible no where; that a project so deeply combined and complicated should have existed in any country, much less in Great Britain, to the extent in which, whatever might be their verdict, they would be satisfied it had existed.

The project, imported from France in the latter end of the year 1791 or in 1792, was to constitute, in London, with affiliated societies in the country, clubs which were to rule this land on the principles of the French government, the alleged unalienable, imprescriptible rights of man, inconsistent in their nature with the being of a king, or of lords; deposing therefore, in the moment of creating a sovereign power, either mediately or immediately, the King, and introducing a republican government, with a right of eternal reform, and therefore with a prospect of eternal revolution.

The Attorney-General then noticed the structure and proceedings of the Jacobin Club in Paris, and the Constitutional and Corresponding Societies in London, which, in imitation of their Parisian model, hoped to establish, even against the sense of the great majority of the nation, a government founded on the decrees of delegates appointed by them or through their affiliated coadjutors. In support of this proposition, he detailed, with minuteness, the resolves of the societies, many of which were signed by Mr. Hardy, as secretary; one of which ordained that their proceedings should be regularly transmitted by their secretary to all their corresponding constitutional societies in England, Scotland, and France. He noticed their approbation, often expressed, of the works of Paine, and the unconstitutional principles which they extracted from

them, and avowed as their own; the declarations sent on the same day from places so distant from each other as Sheffield and Norwich, expressing approbation and adoption of those works; from them the Attorney-General read many extracts, making on them very pointed observations. To their eulogies on these works, they added encomiums on those of Mr. Mackintosh, Joel Barlow, and some others; and he noticed the rejection of their proffered alliance by the society of Friends of the People, as expressed by Lord John Russell. He went on to recite all the correspondence with the Jacobin Club, the Legislative Assembly, and the National Convention of France, their congratulations on the excesses of the revolution, expressed both in written resolves and in the mission of John Frost and Joel Barlow. In the course of his details, he noticed the vote of the Constitutional Society, at a time when we were on the eve of a war, and soon after the decree of November 1792, admitting citizen St. André, citizen Barrère, and citizen Roland, as most judicious and enlightened friends of human liberty, associated honorary members, and directing that the speeches of St. André and Barrère, as given in the *Moniteur* in January 1793, should be inserted in the books of the society. From these speeches, the jury would judge what the Constitutional Society meant by a convention, and whether that convention was to be the means of forwarding their application to Parliament, or of introducing, by its own force as a representative government, an assembly which would for the time absorb all the powers of that which was established; a body competent to create a legislature, and possessing within itself an eternal power of reform, an eternal source of revolution.

He then detailed the proceedings in May 1793, and the formation, acts, and suppression, of the Convention in Scotland. In all these affairs, Mr. Hardy had been an active co-operator; and the Attorney-General said that if he left the case there, he should have fully established his accusation of high treason.

He then adverted to the meeting at Chalk Farm,

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in April 1794 ; and, very remarkably, there were also meetings in the open air at Leeds, Wakefield, Huddersfield, Bradford, Bristol, and various other places. This project of a convention had been communicated to many parts of the country, and the prisoner sent a circular letter to the remotest parts of this kingdom, for the purpose of assembling this convention, to effect the project of the British Convention at Edinburgh ; the body of which had been dissipated, but which was still carrying on its purposes by measures precisely the same as those which had existed in this part of the island. In stating the transactions at Chalk Farm, he noticed the groan of the whole party at the rejection of them by the Friends of the People ; a most scurrilous hand-bill, found in the pocket of one of the party, announcing a dramatic performance under the title of "The Guillotine, or George's Head in a Basket ;" and an expression of Mr. Thelwall, who, striking the head from a pot of porter with a knife, exclaimed—"Thus would I serve all kings." He detailed also the means which had been taken to procure pikes and other military weapons, and to frame spiked instruments, called night-cats, to be placed in the streets to lame the horses of the cavalry.

Adjournment.

Application by
Mr. Erskine.

Until nearly midnight, the examination of witnesses was pursued, when, after some discussion, it was ordered that the jury should be accommodated with beds, under the care of the sheriffs, and the safe keeping of their officers. No progress had yet been made beyond the production and reading of some of the papers to which the Attorney-General had alluded in his speech ; but Mr. Erskine availed himself of the opportunity to make an impression favourable to his client. "My Lord," he said, "all this immense body of papers has been seized, and remained a long time in the hands of the officers of the crown. We applied to see them, but were refused ; we applied to the Privy Council, and were refused ; we were referred to your lordship, because they know that your lordship could not grant such a request : we are therefore here with all these papers tumbled upon our heads, without the

“ least opportunity of examining them ; and yet from
 “ this mass of papers, which the Attorney-General took
 “ nine hours to read, the act of compassing the King’s
 “ death is to be collected. From a view of the whole,
 “ I trust your lordship will be disposed to indulge me ;
 “ indeed, I shall expect, in justice to the prisoner, that
 “ I may have an opportunity, before I address the
 “ jury upon this mass of evidence, to know what is in
 “ it ; because your lordship must very well know that,
 “ though taking all the pains I can to look at it as it
 “ is read, yet it is quite impossible for the human mind
 “ to take it in, or form any idea of it, without an hour
 “ or two at least (for I should not require more) to
 “ take it into consideration.” He was assured by the
 court that all reasonable opportunity for making the
 defence should be afforded.

During the next and a portion of the following
 day, the counsel for the Crown produced, and, after
 some lengthened arguments on the law of evidence,
 read, a great mass of correspondence between the
 societies in London and those in Scotland, and various
 parts of the country, and with individuals and bodies
 in France, sustaining the statements made by the
 Attorney-General. They next proceeded to the trans-
 mission of money and the fabrication of arms ; but as
 some of this matter could only be deposed to by mem-
 bers of the societies, who acceded to and took part in
 the general plans, the prisoner’s counsel easily obtained
 from them declarations that the only object aimed at
 was the peaceable reform of the Commons House of
 Parliament, with vehement protestations that they
 never thought of abolishing the laws, and abhorred
 the very thought of deposing or injuring the King, or
 any of his family ; their plan of reform was precisely
 that of the Duke of Richmond, and the arms they
 ordered were purely for self defence. These ex-
 planations were contradicted by other witnesses, whose
 evidence was depreciated by calling them spies, a
 course which in cross-examination was sometimes
 pursued in such a way as to draw forth the animad-
 version of the court. The effect of the exculpatory

29, 30, 31, and
 November 1.
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evidence derived from the confederate witnesses was much diminished by admissions and disclosures they were compelled to make of expressions used by the leaders of the societies, derogatory to the authority and condemnatory of the existence of the House of Commons, which was to be superseded by a national convention; of the House of Lords, which was injurious to general liberty; and their declarations that the people were betrayed by both parties in the state. At one of their dinners*, Mr. Horne Tooke, taking care to premise that he was perfectly sober, said, and with great applause, that the Parliament was a scoundrel sink of corruption; the opposition a scoundrel sink of opposition; there was a junction between these two scoundrel parties, formed for the purpose of destroying the rights and liberties of the country. Speaking of the hereditary nobility; he asked, if that skip-jack Jenkinson could be considered as one of the hereditary nobility of the country; that there was a junction between the ministerial party and the opposition in the House of Lords, in order to amuse, or abuse, that poor man, the King. Their pretences to loyalty and respect for the King and his family, and for the authorities of the state, advanced by the witnesses, were falsified by many of their writings, speeches, and toasts, and particularly, so far as it was of importance, by a mock play-bill, alluded to by the Attorney-General, announcing—"For the benefit of "Mr. John Bull; at the Federation Theatre, in "Equality Square, of a new and entertaining farce, "called La Guillotine, or George's Head in a Basket; "Numpy the Third, by Mr. Gwelp, being the last time "of his appearing in that character." The Prince of Wales and the two other senior princes were described in terms equally degrading, as were many distinguished persons, both English and Foreign. To Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Grey, and Mr. Erskine, was assigned the character of national guards; tight-rope dancing from the lamp-post was to be performed by Messrs. Canterbury, York, Durham, &c. and the whole was

* At the Crown and Anchor, 2 May.

to conclude with a grand decapitation of placemen, pensioners, and German leeches. Sentiments equally sanguinary and savage were contained in a ballad found in the possession of Mr. Hardy*.

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With respect to arms; it was clearly proved that pikes and night-cats had been ordered, and it was attempted to be shewn that a knife, to which the French name of *couteau secret* was given, had been provided for the purpose of cutting the reins of the cavalry horses, or of stabbing, while the assailant was protected from danger by the action of a spring; but it was proved that such knives had long been publicly exposed to sale, and were in daily use for ordinary purposes. The motives for bespeaking arms were shewn in a paper distributed at the meetings, and reprinted for general perusal, with only slight variances: "Countrymen, you are told by those who are in office that you are in danger of a French invasion. You are told by those who are out of office that you are in danger of a Hessian or Hanoverian invasion. In either case arms will be of use to you; agree among yourselves; get arms, and learn the use of them!"

Such was the case to which, on the fifth day of its progress, Mr. Erskine addressed his defence, and it may justly be termed a glorious day in his brilliant professional life: never had his powerful grasp of

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Mr. Erskine's
defence.

* A few lines may serve as a specimen:

The starving wretch, who steals for bread,
But seldom meets compassion;
And shall a crown preserve the head
Of him who robs a nation?
Such partial laws we all despise;
See Gallia's bright example;
The glorious sight before our eyes,
We'll on every tyrant trample.
Come, rouse to arms; 'tis now the time
To punish past transgressions.
Proud bishops next we will translate,
Among priest-crafted martyrs;
The guillotine on peers shall wait,
And knights we'll hang in garters;
These despots long have trod us down,
And judges are their engines;
These wretched minions of a crown
Demand a people's vengeance.
Come, rouse, &c.

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mind and acuteness in reasoning, his affecting eloquence and his pointed wit, displayed themselves to more advantage, or with greater effect. He began by acceding, in the prisoner's name and his own, to the Attorney-General's eulogium on the British Constitution. "But before this eulogium," he said, "can have any just or useful application, we ought to reflect upon what it is which entitles this constitution to the praise so justly bestowed upon it. To say nothing at present of its most essential excellence, or rather the very soul of it, the share the people ought to have in their government, by a pure representation, for the assertion of which the prisoner stands arraigned as a traitor; what is it that distinguishes the government of England from the most despotic monarchies; what but the security which the subject enjoys in a trial and judgment by his equals, rendered doubly secure, as being a part of a system of law which no expediency can warp, and which no power can abuse with impunity." In the Attorney-General's second preliminary observation, he equally agreed; he anxiously wished the jury to bear in memory the anarchy which was desolating France; in that unhappy country, under the dominion of a barbarous state necessity, every protection of law was abrogated or destroyed; under such a system of alarm and terror, no man could say that his life, his reputation, or any one human blessing, was secure to him for a moment; if accused of federalism, or moderatism, or incivism, or of whatever else the changing fashions and factions of the day should have lifted up into high treason against the state; he must see his friends, his family, and the light of heaven no more: the accusation and the sentence being the same, following one another as the thunder pursues the flash. Such was the calamity which he invoked the jury to avert from his client, protesting in his name against all appeals to speculations concerning consequences, when the law commanded them to look only to intentions.

In the indictment, the prisoners were uniformly charged with conspiring to put the King to death, and

the jury would therefore have three distinct matters for consideration. What share the prisoner had, in concert with others, in assembling any Convention; what were the acts to be done by this Convention, when assembled; and what was the view, purpose, and intention of those who projected it. This third consideration, indeed, would comprehend, or rather precede and swallow up, the other two; because, before it could be material to decide upon the views of the Convention, as pointed to the subversion of the rule and order of the King's political authority (even if such views could be ascribed to it, and brought home, even personally, to the prisoner), it would be necessary to examine whether that criminal conspiracy against the established order of the community was hatched and engendered with a wicked contemplation to destroy the natural life and person of the King; whether the acts charged and established by the evidence, were done in pursuance, and in fulfilment, of the same traitorous purpose.

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The subversion of the King's political government, and all conspiracies to subvert it, were crimes of great enormity, which the law was open to punish; but neither of them was the crime in question. The prisoner was not charged with a conspiracy against the King's political government, but against his natural life. He was not accused of merely taking steps to depose him from his authority, but with having done so with the intention to bring him to death. The act of conspiring to depose the King might indeed be evidence, according to circumstances, of an intention to destroy his natural existence; but never could constitute the intention itself. In support of this opinion, Mr. Erskine cited the statute which defines the crime of High Treason*, the various acts of Parliament, by which its protecting vigour was restored, when, by irregular judgments, it had been impaired; the opinions of the greatest legal authorities, Coke, Hale, and Foster; and the cases from

* 25th Edward the Third, st. 5, c. 2.

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that of Sir John Frend, in the reign of William the Third, to the most recent one of Lord George Gordon, to shew that, in framing the charge, the terms of the statute must be literally followed, and the intent, to cause the actual death of the King, incontestibly proved.

The prisoner, with the other persons named in the indictment, was charged with a conspiracy to hold a Convention in England; it was admitted that the ostensible purpose was a reform of Parliament, and it was the duty of the Crown to shew that the whole mass of correspondence upon the table was only a cloak to conceal a hidden machination to subvert by force all the authorities of the kingdom, and assume them to themselves. As to reform, the late Lord Chatham had declared his sentiments, and the Duke of Richmond had been the advocate of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, and urged his plan with a boldness that would leave in the back ground the strongest figures in the writings on the table. This plan had been declared by the witnesses to be the only one which they had pursued; and if they were not worthy of credit, it were better for the advocate and his audience to return home, for the cause was over. He cited passages from Mr. Burke's "Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents," written in 1770, and affirmed that collecting the people together to consider of their rights, could not be detrimental to the sovereign. Locke defended King William's title on no other principle than the rights of man; and from the revered work of that author, and not from the revolution in France, one of the papers in the evidence, the most stigmatized, obviously flowed; for its author, Mr. Redhead York, held in his hand and descanted on Locke upon Government, when he delivered the speech on the Castle Hill, at Sheffield.

Without feeling that it was necessary to defend every expression, some of which were undoubtedly rash and inflammatory, Mr. Erskine vindicated the right of the society to form conventions or meetings,

and adjust a plan of rational union, to consider either of a petition to the House of Commons, or how they should proceed when the House of Commons died a natural death, and the people re-entered into their rights. If the whole institution of the Corresponding Society were looked at, it would be found to accord exactly with the plan of the Duke of Richmond, as expressed in the letters to Colonel Sharman and the High Sheriff of Sussex. There was then in court a distinguished member of the House of Commons, who, in 1780, sat publicly at Guildhall, with many others, some of them magistrates of the City, as a Convention of Delegates for the same objects; and just before the Convention began to meet at Edinburgh, there was a Convention regularly assembled, attended by delegates from all the counties of Scotland, for the express and avowed purpose of altering the constitution of Parliament; the Lord Chief Baron of Scotland was in the chair, the Honorable Henry Erskine*, Dean of the faculty of Advocates, was present; they met in consequence of a petition for the alteration of the election laws having been rejected, and styled themselves "A Convention of Delegates, chosen from the counties of Scotland, for altering and amending the laws concerning elections." Their proceedings were regularly published, and their first resolution was brought to London, and its insertion in the Morning Chronicle, as an advertisement, paid for by Sir Thomas Dundas, lately created a peer. Had any man treated these measures as treasonable or seditious, he would have been considered as an infamous libeller; why then were different constructions put on similar transactions? Why was every thing to be held up as bona fide when the example is set, and mala fide when it is followed?

He treated Paine's Rights of Man as proceeding entirely from Mr. Burke's work, which questioned the right of the people of France to act as they had; while Mr. Paine took the other side, and having, during the

* Brother to the counsel.

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American revolution, imbibed principles of republican government, he mixed with the controversy many harsh reflexions on monarchy, as established even in England. This would account for many expressions uttered by the prisoners; "Many," said Mr. Erskine, "which I have uttered myself, and shall continue to utter every day of my life, and call upon the spies to record them."

The views of the Corresponding Society with regard to the Convention in Edinburgh, and consequently the views of the prisoner, must be collected from the written instructions to the delegates; for he who constitutes an agent, is only bound by what he does within the scope of his agency. The words of instruction were, "The delegates are trusted, on the part of this society, to assist in bringing forward and supporting any constitutional measure for procuring a real representation of the Commons of Great Britain." The papers of the Scotch Convention were all seized by government, and from what had been disclosed, it was impossible to believe that such a meeting meant to assume and maintain the functions and authorities of the state. They were a few peaceable, unarmed men, discussing, in a constitutional manner, the means of obtaining a reform in Parliament, and who, to maintain the club, collected a little money; a few shillings one day, as many pence another: in their first sessions this great committee of supply produced fifteen pounds, from which were to be deducted two bad shillings.

No member of this Convention was indicted for high treason, or even a breach of the peace; but the law of Scotland, arbitrary as it is, was disturbed to find a name for their offence, and the rules of trial violated to convict them. He would not vindicate all that had been published during, and in consequence of, these trials; but allowance ought to be made for a state of heat and irritation. The societies came to various resolutions; some good; some bad; but all irregular; and among others, to one comparing the Scotch Judges to Jefferies, and wishing they might

share his fate. What then? Irreverent expressions against judges are not acts of high treason; if they had assembled round the Court of Justiciary, and hanged them in the execution of their offices, it would not have been treason, within the statute.

On the addresses to the National Convention of France, he treated but slightly; they came no lower than November 1792, when the countries were at peace; and it was to be lamented that they were but acts of subjects, and not sanctioned by the state itself. Notwithstanding all the declamations on French anarchy, it was clear that the people of Sheffield were unanimously for universal representation in a British House of Commons. To illegal proceedings of the magistrates, and consequent heart-burnings among the people, he ascribed the demand of the society for arms, and hence Davison's letter to Hardy. To this letter, however, it appeared Hardy had returned no answer. "Good God!" Mr. Erskine exclaimed, "what has become of the humane sanctuary of English justice, and where is the sense and meaning of the term proveably in the statute of King Edward, if such evidence can be received against an English subject on a trial for his life? Mr. Hardy never before corresponded with Davison; he never desired him to write; he never returned an answer; he never forwarded the inclosure to Norwich; he never even communicated the letter itself to his own society, although he was its secretary, which showed he considered it as the unauthorized officious correspondence of a private man; he never acted upon it at all, nor appears to have regarded it as dangerous or important, since he neither destroyed nor concealed it. Gentlemen, I hardly know in what language to express my astonishment, that the Crown can ask you to shed the blood of the man at the bar upon such foundations. Yet this is the whole of the written evidence concerning arms; for the remainder of the plot rests for its foundation upon the parole testimony, the whole of which I shall peruse with precision, and not suffer a link of the chain to pass unexamined."

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Mr. Erskine then recapitulated the substance of the evidence delivered; and having examined it with great minuteness, and many severe observations on some of the witnesses, he came to the prisoner's correspondence with the Convention at Edinburgh, resting on the testimony of a person named McEwan. "And to what," said Mr. Erskine, "does that testimony amount? Mr. Watt, a man who is hanged, said, that he wished to correspond with Mr. Hardy in a safe manner; so that because a ruffian and a scoundrel whom I never heard or saw, chuses, at the distance of four hundred miles, to say that he wishes to correspond with me, I am to be involved in the guilt of his actions! It is not proved, or insinuated, that Mr. Hardy ever saw, or heard of, or knew that such men were in being as Watt and Downie: nor is it proved or asserted that any letter was in fact written by either of them to Hardy, or to any other person. No such letter has been found in his possession, nor a trace of any connexion between them and any member of any English society. The truth, I believe, is, that nothing was intended by Watt but to entrap others, that he might obtain a reward for himself, and he has been amply and justly rewarded."

After some forcible observations on the nature of belief and the quality of proof required in criminal cases and on the law of evidence, the effect of precedents, the state of European politics, the loss of Brabant by the Emperor, and of America by Great Britain, on which occasion he again quoted Mr. Burke, Mr. Erskine concluded with a prayer to Providence to direct and fortify the judgment of the Jury, and a promise to give clear evidence of the views of the societies, and of the conduct and character of the prisoner.

The delivery of this speech occupied seven hours. Mr. Erskine's voice at last came down to an audible whisper; but even that did not impair its effect; the attention of his audience never flagged. Witnesses were called to prove that the views of the Corresponding Society extended only to peaceable exertions for a reform of the House of Commons; some answered

Evidence for
the prisoner.

questions very candidly ; some knew but little of the matter they came to prove ; and some prevaricated in such a manner, that, had they been witnesses for the Crown, the jury would have been advised altogether to disregard their testimony ; but the prisoner received the character of an honest, industrious, simple, and unpretending man. The declarations and views of the Society of Friends of the People were shewn from their minutes ; the Duke of Richmond was called to prove his letter to Colonel Sharman, so often referred to, and a protest was proved, which his Grace, with thirty-two other peers, had signed in February, 1780, on the rejection of a motion to appoint a committee, consisting of Lords possessing neither place nor pension, to examine into the public expenditure and the mode of accounting for it. Mr. Strutt, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Francis, and Lord Lauderdale, deposed to conversations and communications tending to shew the absence of all treasonable intentions on the part of the prisoner.

According to the privilege allowed in cases of high treason, Mr. Gibbs addressed the Jury, and his speech was a masterly display of judicious eloquence : it was close, logical reasoning, supported by extensive and exact learning ; cogent in matter, although not adorned with passages of impassioned declamation or rhetorical appeal to feeling or to fancy. On points of law, Mr. Gibbs maintained the same opinions with Mr. Erskine, and illustrated them with many new arguments and apposite citations. On the French revolution, he observed that certainly the prisoner and many of those with whom he acted did highly approve of it ; it was likely that they should do so in its origin, because they were Englishmen and freemen, and its original object was to give to slaves the liberty which we enjoy. When the origin of the French revolution was past, and acts of which no rational man could sanction had taken place, they still approved generally ; but it was not these acts, but the revolution at large ; and supposing that, under all existing circumstances in France, they had expressed a gene-

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ral approbation of the revolution and the actual state of things, was it to be inferred that they wished the same to take place in England? Did the same necessity lie upon us as upon France? Were we an afflicted and oppressed people? Had we any reason to complain of an overbearing nobility, whose rights were inconsistent with the general liberty of the people? Had we any reason to complain of the oppressions of the Crown or of the Royal Family? But wishes of union with France had been expressed. Why, what man was there who, if it could be accomplished with safety to this country, would not wish for an union rather than such a war as the present? The motive for addressing the National Convention was to prevent those calamities. Surely if that end could have been attained, it would have been wisdom to seek it. The prisoner and those with whom he acted might have judged ill; the war may have been just and necessary; but a contrary opinion might have been entertained. "Then," he proceeded, "the insertion of Roland and Barrère's speeches is attempted to be fixed upon Mr. Hardy: and mark how wide he stands from it: there is a resolution, at a meeting of the society, that certain speeches, in the French language, from a French newspaper, should be inserted in their books, and they never are inserted. Do you think that shoemaker understands French? Do you think that shoemaker ever read the *Moniteur*? Can you believe that, at the time when that passed, he could have any idea of the contents of these speeches? But if the fact were proved upon him, if he were the person who made that motion, what does it amount to? That he wished to have communicated to the members of his society the reasons upon which those persons acted who were desirous of bringing about that calamitous event in France. I do not say that the prisoner might not be misguided; I do not say that those by whom he was advised, or with whom he acted, might not have misled him; but even if he had read the speeches himself, if he had himself entered the resolutions on

" the book in English, I do insist that it does not furnish a presumption that, if he applauded the murder of the King of France, he compassed the death of the King of England. The circumstances of that nation and this are widely different. Thank God ! the King of England lives in the hearts of his subjects : so I think ; so you all think ; and so the prisoner thinks. And it would be monstrous cruelty to impute to him a design against the life of the King of England, because, under certain circumstances, he published to a society the reasons upon which certain persons in France thought it right to bring their King to a calamitous end."

After some remarks on the Scotch Convention, whose proceedings, except in the case of Watt and Downie, did not amount to high treason, he treated on the providing of arms as a legal act. They had prepared pikes because their persons, their homes, and their lives were not safe ; they had actually been attacked, their houses assailed, and inflammatory hand-bills circulated around the town, inviting people to attack them by force ; and they thought that, when so beset, they might repel force by force, and make preparation for resistance.

Having concluded his general remarks on the written, he analysed the parol evidence, recapitulating the statements of the witnesses for the Crown one by one, and endeavouring to shew, that the arming with pikes at Sheffield was a measure of necessary precaution, founded on the threats which had been uttered by the opposing party, and justified by the injuries which Dr. Priestley had sustained at Birmingham, and Mr. Walker at Manchester ; and he ridiculed the idea of a plot, when only three dozen pikes and three or four French knives had been procured in two years ; while it appeared in evidence that Sheffield alone could have supplied ten thousand pikes in a day. The evidence for the Crown afforded no proof of a treasonable intent ; and that which had been adduced for the prisoner, and the Duke of Richmond's letter, shewed that the complaints against the corruption of Parliament, and

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the claim to universal suffrage and annual elections, had not originated with him. On the protest of the Lords, he asserted that if merits had been taken instead of numbers, those who subscribed it would have formed a majority. There was at their head the venerable and learned Lord Camden, as great a constitutional lawyer as this country had ever seen, and as firm a supporter of its constitution. There were many more, some of whom were now acting in administration; the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Grafton, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Rockingham, Lord Scarborough, and, true to his old principles, the Duke of Richmond. Was that illegal to which Lord Camden gave such an effect, when he stated that petitions offered by the general associations of the people ought to be attended to by the House of Commons, and that it is inconsistent with their wisdom to reject them? Did he not, by his protest, hold out to the public, that when separate petitions are rejected, the object of which is thought conducive to the public good, it is the right of the people to associate for that public good, and, being associated, to present such petitions as are not likely to be rejected. If, then, the man at the bar had always acted on the Duke of Richmond's plan, who constantly pointed out corruptions existing in the state,—if it was the opinion of those eminent men who signed that protest that such associations ought to be attended to,—how was the prisoner implicated in any guilt?

From the whole course of the evidence, it appeared that, although the prisoner had never been without a spy at his elbow, not a single rash or intemperate expression had ever escaped his lips; and surely it was too hard to say that he entertained in his mind, during all this time, a project concerning which he never uttered a syllable, even to those with whom it is pretended he conspired. “His life has been sifted; it is not proved, that, through the whole course of it, conversing with men upon the subject of this intended convention, and of the Parliamentary reform meant

“ to be effected by it, he ever dropped a single expression from which it can be collected that he meant to use force : if he did not, he must be acquitted of the present charge.”

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Solicitor-
General in
reply.

In a general reply, which occupied ten hours, the Solicitor-General denied that the proof required by the statute, in a case of high treason, differed from that which is necessary in one of murder or robbery ; such as was sufficient to satisfy the mind of the jury that the prisoner was guilty. The conspiracy charged was not simply one to destroy the life of the King on the throne, and aiming only at him, but in effect to destroy monarchy altogether ; in the language of one of the letters, “ to rip up monarchy by the roots, and plant democracy in its stead.” It was perfectly immaterial when the intention was first conceived. The question was, did the prisoner ever conceive it ? and he did, and acted in pursuance of an intent so conceived, he was guilty of high treason, although the it were not necessarily a distinct intent to destroy the King, but to do an act which, by probable consequences, might endanger his life. He produced many expressions, from the written and parol evidence, to shew what the real designs of the party were, although sometimes artfully concealed by ambiguous and evasive expressions. They had adopted the speeches of Barrère and St. André, determined republicans and regicides, and the declaration of Barlow to the Convention, that kings were good for nothing. The leaders of the societies had resolved and declared that the people should no longer rely on leaders of parties, but act for themselves. York had declared, that when a revolution of sentiment should have dispersed the mists of prejudice,—when, by incessant thundering from the press, the meanest cottager should be enlightened, and the sun of reason shine in its fullest meridian over us ; then the commanding voice of the whole people should recommend the five hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen in Saint Stephen’s Chapel to go about their business.

On the eighth day of the trial, Lord Chief Justice

November 5.
Summing-up.

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Acquitted.

17 to 22.

Trial of John
Horne Tooke.

Eyre summed up the evidence with great minuteness and impartiality. The jury retired, taking with them the record of the indictment, and in three hours returned with a verdict of not guilty.

Mr. John Horne Tooke was next put on his trial; but, after the account which has been given of the proceedings and evidence on that of Hardy, general statements are unnecessary; and such only will be given as belong peculiarly to the individual prisoner, whose age, literary reputation, and long activity in political discussions, rendered him an object of general interest. Among the papers seized, was a letter to him written by Mr. Joyce, in these words—"Dear Citizen,—this morning, at six o'clock, Citizen Hardy was taken away, by order from the Secretary of State's Office: they seized every thing they could lay hands on. Query,—is it possible to get ready by Thursday?" Of this paper, which turned out to be utterly unimportant, Mr. Tooke, most imprudently perhaps, gave no explanation; for his answers, when examined before the Privy Council, were short, guarded, and taunting. When brought before the court for trial, he assumed the air of a man hardly and unjustly treated, spoke of his sufferings while in custody, by which his health had been impaired, and claimed, not as a favour, but as a right, to be removed from the place where prisoners on trial usually stood, and allowed one near his counsel. Denying most distinctly any right the prisoner could have to be placed in a position different from all other persons under accusation, the court professed an inclination to accommodate him, on account of his health; and he was content to waive his pretensions of right, and accept it as a favour.

Opening of the
Solicitor-
General.

The Solicitor-General stated this case to the jury, and the Attorney-General made the reply. The general propositions of law and fact were similar to those in the former trial, varied by the introduction of a few different proceedings of the societies, and communications of individuals, and the separate personal acts of the prisoner, his hand-writing in altering and in signing

some of the votes, resolutions, and missives, and his presence and conduct at their meetings. It appeared, more clearly on this than on the former trial, that the votes in honour of Barrère, St. André, and Roland, had never been communicated to them, and that the speeches directed to be entered on their journals had never been transcribed.

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In a luminous and able defence, Mr. Erskine introduced as much novelty as the case was capable of bearing, and shewed his wonted ingenuity in averting from his client the effect of dangerous misconstruction. Among other observations, he said that a subscription entered into for the support of Sinclair, which had been referred to, was a signal instance of Mr. Horne Tooke's generosity and nobleness of mind: he had constantly objected to his being sent as a delegate; but in the hour of his distress was the first to take upon himself the public odium of protecting him. In the letter written on this subject was an expression respecting Mr. Pitt. "If ever that man," said the prisoner, "should be brought to trial for his desertion of the cause of Parliamentary reform, for which Mr. Sinclair is to suffer, I hope the country would not consent to send him to Botany Bay." "On this part of the letter," said Mr. Erskine, "I have but one remark to make: Mr. Tooke is not indicted for compassing and imagining the death of Mr. Pitt." On the letter already stated, Mr. Erskine said, "This letter, being intercepted, was packed up into the green box and reserved as evidence of a plot. It is another lesson of caution against vague suspicions; Mr. Tooke having undertaken to collect, from the Court Calendar, a list of the titles, offices, and pensions bestowed by Mr. Pitt on his relations, friends, and dependents, and being too correct to come out with a work of that magnitude and extent upon a short notice, had fixed no time for it, which induced Mr. Joyce, who was anxious for its publication, to ask if he could be ready with it by Thursday."

Defence by
Mr. Erskine.

Many witnesses were called, some apparently more for shew than probable use; but others, who mate-

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rially assisted the prisoner's case by stating their knowledge of his views, principles, conduct and pursuits, the formation and acts of the Constitutional Society, and the share taken by the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt in meetings and associations for the reform of Parliament. Among them were Major Cartwright, the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Francis, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Pitt, Earl Stanhope, the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, Lord Frederick Campbell, Earl Camden, and the Bishop of Gloucester.

Acquittal.

Mr. Gibbs aided the defence by a judicious and eloquent speech; and, after a clear and impartial summing-up, the jury, without hesitation, declared the prisoner not guilty.

December 1.
Discharge of
several other
prisoners.

Shortly after this acquittal, John Augustus Bonney, Jeremiah Joyce, Stewart Kyd, and Thomas Holcroft, were put to the bar, a jury sworn, and, the Attorney-General having declared that he had no intention to offer evidence against them, discharged.

December 1.
Trial of
John Thelwall.

Mr. Serjeant Adair then proceeded on the case of John Thelwall. Having first observed that the other trials did not decide that the law had been incorrectly stated in those cases, but only that the evidence had failed in satisfying the juries of the guilty participation of the persons accused, he advanced the same general facts and circumstances which had before been produced, but in a much more condensed form; and supported them by evidence which shewed the acts, resolutions, and publications before displayed; and he brought forward very cogent testimony of the zealous participation of the prisoner in them, and his conduct, declarations, and speeches, at public meetings and on other occasions. As the case for the prosecution was closed early on the third day, Mr. Erskine expressed some sense of disadvantage at being suddenly called upon to enter on the defence; but he executed his task with his never-failing ability and energy. Witnesses were produced, and, among others, two of those who had been included in the indictment and acquitted—Mr. Horne Tooke and Mr. Bonney. After Mr. Gibbs had been heard for the prisoner, and Mr. Serjeant Adair

in reply, the Lord Chief Justice summed up the evidence, and the jury, after deliberating an hour and forty minutes, returned a verdict of not guilty. The other persons named in the indictment were acquitted without further proceeding; and several prisoners, in various parts of the country, were also set at liberty, on their undertaking to appear if called upon, either to be tried or to give evidence against others*.

Considering calmly these prosecutions, they appear, in every point of view, to have been unfortunate, not to say unwise. It cannot be supposed that the end to be desired was the execution of twelve individuals, most of them obscure, all utterly unimportant; even as an example, such a result would not have been sufficiently impressive to diminish the activity, still less to destroy the existence of the revolutionary societies. After the recent examples of America and France, it would have been both impolitic and presumptuous to undervalue such associations; but in the proceedings on the present occasion they were evidently overvalued, and the force employed against them raised, or gave means of raising, a sensation in the public mind calculated to enfeeble rather than to strengthen any salutary apprehensions which might otherwise have existed. It was desirable to frustrate the schemes of desperate innovators; but the British public, who had ever been accustomed to meet, to associate, to proclaim their political opinions and predilections, to devise means, and to recommend measures for removal of their grievances and improvement of their social condition, viewed with anxiety and alarm those measures which tended to plunge individuals into the dreadful gulph of high treason, when they had, unintentionally perhaps, exceeded the bounds which an exact know-

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Who is acquitted.
Other prisoners discharged.

Observations.

* The particulars of the trials of Hardy and Horne Tooke are derived from the full statement of proceedings from the notes in short-hand of Joseph Gurney, in six octavo volumes, republished in Howell's State Trials, vols. xxiv. and xxv. That of Thelwall is not copiously and faithfully detailed, but is found in the daily and some periodical publications of the time. I have also consulted Stephens's Life of John Horne Tooke, vol. ii. chap. 4, and a few antecedent paragraphs, same volume, p. 115, et seqq. A Narrative of Facts, published soon after his liberation, by Thomas Holcroft and the Memoirs of the same gentleman, vol. ii. c. 3.

ledge of the laws and a timid prudence would have prescribed. The revolution in America was undoubtedly forwarded by corresponding committees; but that was not a struggle of mere speculists and robbers to overturn that which was established, and to seize that which they coveted; it was the effort of a son, who has by time and strength been enabled to judge and act for himself, to throw off the control of a parent whose aid he thinks he can dispense with, and whose behests he is no longer disposed to obey. Their war against constituted authorities was merely incidental; they sought a new form of political existence—an exercise of their own free will, whatever shape their government might assume, without reference to a power existing in a remote region, and in whose councils they were not represented or participators. In the course of the contest, personal persecution, unjust spoliation, and many acts of cruelty, occurred; but they were the incidents and not the motives of the proceeding. They had no established church to subvert; no hereditary monarchy or nobility to degrade; no constitution, long established and generally revered, to destroy; no class among them was originally dedicated to ruin or murder, but the opposition of man to man, however tyrannically or vindictively it might be conducted, arose from the position which each party chose to assume in a conflict which became unexpectedly rancorous and deadly. In France, the efforts of plebeian agitators had been aided in their commencement by men of high estimation in literature and philosophy, and countenanced by men of rank and public bodies; but in England, after the firm and dignified answer in which Lord John Russell repelled the advances of the Constitutional Society toward that of Friends of the People*, there remained no probability that many men of high rank or distinguished station would mingle with, or even effectually countenance, those whom they must conceive to be, if not unprincipled, at least overweening speculists.

The revolutionary party in Great Britain then

* Vol. v. p. 218.

might be considered as formed of three classes; honest enthusiasts, who, being persuaded that the general welfare was impaired and the nation oppressed through the depraved state of the representation in Parliament, associated to obtain relief, not contemplating any violent or illegal measures, although they did not withdraw their names or their sanction from societies, some of whose resolves and declarations exceeded the bounds which, if the power had been with them, they would have prescribed. The next class was of men more subtle and wily, who foresaw that if any important change could be effected by the stern mandate of an imperious populacy, they might acquire an ascendancy, the ultimate objects of which they could not define, nor had perhaps taken the pains to examine, but which would at least repair the miscarriages and expiate the affronts they had sustained in earlier life, or accelerate the advantages of those who were only entering upon their career. The remaining party would be reckless, boisterous, unprincipled adventurers, void of fame or property, but ready to embark in any enterprize, forward any project, or excite any commotion from which they could hope to derive notoriety or acquire profit.

Assuming that the persons indicted were intended to comprise some of all these classes, and that the three who were tried were put forward as specimens, the objects were ill chosen, and the proceeding injudiciously arranged. Hardy, on whom the earliest labours of the prosecutors were lavished, could only be deemed one of the first class. His life, manners, and appearance prepossessed every one in his favour, and the acts imputed to him were not originally his own, but merely sanctioned by his presence, or authenticated by his official signature. He is justly spoken of by one of the persons indicted with him, but not tried, and who might be ranked in the same class with himself, in these terms: "What were his views? What " his incitements? A man of no learning, excellent " in his morals, simple in his manners, and, whether " they were wise or foolish, highly virtuous in his

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“intentions. Is it imagined that he meant to make himself prime minister? Had he the daring spirit, the deep plans, and the towering genius of a Cromwell? No one will affirm things so extravagant. He was a good and active man in his endeavours to procure a Parliamentary reform. This, he thought, would have been the greatest of public blessings. For this he was tried, and declared not guilty*.”

Mr. Horne Tooke, who might be supposed to belong to the second class, was, by education, association, and talent, more difficult to be assailed than almost any other individual in the kingdom. Eminent in literature, well versed, although not practised, in the law, and endowed with never-failing presence of mind and self-possession, he came before the court fortified with all these advantages, and standing on the commanding ground of Hardy's acquittal; and even the position which he obtained near his counsel was highly beneficial to him. As the court at the Old Bailey was then shaped, the prisoner stood at a distance of many yards from his advocate, the back of the witness was turned to him, and he had only an indirect view of the jury. In the station which Mr. Tooke obtained, he could not only communicate freely with his legal advisers, but, in cross-examining witnesses, he entered into a sort of personal conversation with them, and, under the semblance of questions, interposed his own remarks and statements, either in explanation or contradiction; all which, with every inflection of voice, every gesture and turn of countenance, went directly to the jury, with whom he thus appeared to hold a friendly, or almost confidential, intercourse. The case against him was but slight; had he been guilty to the whole extent the indictment imputed, it was not easy to believe that a man of so much talent and prudence would have made his designs obvious, and the detection of them easy. Independently of general topics of defence, every thing that appeared to implicate him was capable of easy

* Holcroft's Letter to the Right Honourable William Windham, p. 11.

and satisfactory solution, and the unhesitating acquittal of the jury occasioned less surprise than his ever being exposed to a trial.

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John Thelwall was in no particular like Horne Tooke. His education and acquirements were of a very ordinary description; he had attained notoriety, rather than celebrity, by the delivery of noisy harangues at debating societies, and was in temper and conduct extremely impetuous and unguarded. The opening of the case against him by Serjeant Adair, short in comparison with those which had preceded*, was yet so effective, and the evidence brought home to the prisoner so many culpable acts and declarations, that, even with the advantage of the preceding two acquittals, the jury deliberated an hour and nearly three quarters before they pronounced him not guilty.

On the side of the Crown, every thing was difficulty and disadvantage. It was injudicious (to use the mildest term) to permit the daily publication of proceedings. Beginning with the charge of Lord Chief Justice Eyre, the public mind was exposed to the impression made by all kinds of writers, more particularly those of the author of *Cursory Strictures*, already noticed, which appeared in a daily newspaper†, and in which, in unmitigated terms, he attacked not only the law laid down by the learned and truly upright judge, but imputed to those who managed the proceedings the most disgraceful and dishonourable conduct with respect to the selection and summoning of the jury, and to the ministry acts and intentions in the utmost degree base and sanguinary. "The most temperate and scrupulous man," he said, "cannot fail to confess that the object is, to facilitate the conviction of persons so much the object of detestation to the present ministry. Government hastily involved

* Four hours and a half. On the subject of these long speeches, I may state, that many years after these trials had taken place, and all irritation respecting them had subsided, a gentleman who had served on the Jury said to me, "Sir, if the evidence had been much stronger than it was, I should have had great difficulty in convicting men of a crime, when it occupied the Attorney-General nine hours to tell me what it was."

† Morning Chronicle, October 21.

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“ itself in a dilemma, by apprehending these men for the
 “ sake of propagating alarm ; and it is thought better
 “ to hang a few innocent persons, than that the mi-
 “ nister should stand detected in an error, or that the
 “ arm of government should be weakened by an act of
 “ justice*.”

It is not to be supposed that these attacks were un-
 resisted. The ministerial press assailed the prisoners
 and their cause with no less bitterness ; but still the
 effect of such publications must, on the whole, be un-
 favourable to the prosecution.

But if the impressions so created could have been
 effaced, the daily publication of the proceedings in
 newspapers, with the remarks of the editors, was still
 more pernicious. It was to little purpose that the jury
 were secluded so many days and nights from all per-
 sonal communication with society, if every morning
 brought to their hands notices of all that had passed
 in court, with the observations and impressions of those
 who recorded the proceedings. Making every allow-
 ance for the right of the public to be gratified with
 early and exact information on all subjects of general
 importance, it never could be right that, during the
 progress of a cause, such a course should be pursued ;
 or that, during the intervals between two trials on the
 same indictment, the arguments of counsel should be
 criticized and ridiculed, the conduct and character of
 witnesses vituperated and stigmatized, and the intire
 prosecution held up to ridicule or abhorrence. What-
 ever care might be taken to prevent it, the juries must
 be supposed to have had some communication of the
 publications affecting the case they were impanelled
 to try.

Strongly imbued with political feeling, or im-
 pelled by mere curiosity, a numerous mob constantly
 filled the street and all adjacent places ; but if they
 possessed a disposition to riot or insult, the Lord Mayor
 took proper precautions, and the city volunteers were
 in constant attendance, to aid, if necessary, the civil
 power. There was not, however, any display of dis-

* Cursory Strictures, Appendix 2, p. 4^o.

position to violence; the counsel for the Crown were not insulted in their egress from the Court; but, on every verdict of acquittal, strenuous expressions of exultation took place; and, the horses being removed from their carriage, the defenders of the prisoners were drawn by men to their home. Well indeed did these illustrious advocates deserve this and every homage which the public could bestow. Mr. Gibbs, who was known not to be of the party in politics which would lead him to favour the prisoners, displayed in these trials a luminous mode of reasoning, a lucid arrangement of facts, a sagacious power of distinguishing, with a never-failing perspicuity of expression, before not so well known, but which, from that day, gave him a distinguished station, and enabled him to attain a pre-eminent rank in his profession. Mr. Erskine added to all these perfections the graces of an accomplished orator, using by turns the force of reasoning, the powers of pathos, and the blandishments of wit, to an extent and with a copiousness rarely equalled, never surpassed.

On the whole, these trials were of the utmost benefit to the public interest. The unimpassioned fairness of the prosecution, the freedom of defence, the candour of the judges, and the integrity of the juries, afforded to the people of this realm, convincing proofs that their liberties were amply protected by a system which afforded such, and so many, means of security. To those who had been taught to admire freedom in France, it could hardly fail to occur, that if these gentlemen, and all who formed their societies, had been sent to trial on an act of accusation, framed by their honorary members, Barrère and Saint André, the nine hours consumed in the opening of the Attorney General would more than have sufficed to send them all to the scaffold. To government, the failure to convict these few unimportant individuals was in itself a matter of importance only as it is a sort of disgrace not to have attained its end in an object seriously attempted. A charge of high treason ought never to have been made, unless there had been more direct

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evidence of defined treasonable intentions, and more acts and more alarming combinations proved.

If the parties were justly pronounced not guilty of high treason, they would not have escaped from a charge of sedition; no doubt was entertained of the general guiltiness of their minds and intentions; and, by this exposure, although the desired effect was not produced, their powers of delusion were impaired, and government acquired the means of obstructing their progress in machinations of evil, and attempts against the general safety.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTY-NINTH.

1794—1795.

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 Meeting of Parliament.—King's speech.—Unusual proceeding
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 notice of a motion on the Habeas Corpus Act.—His obser-
 vations on Mr. Dundas.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Fox.—Address on
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1794.
Opposition
members take
office.
July 11.

December 10.

A peace party
formed.

BEFORE the next meeting of Parliament, several noblemen and gentlemen, who in former times had been opponents, but afterward voted with ministers, more decidedly embraced the cause of government, by accepting distinguished responsible offices. Earl Fitzwilliam was made Lord President of the Council, Earl Spencer Lord Privy Seal, the Duke of Portland Secretary of State, and Mr. Windham Secretary at War. These arrangements were afterward altered, by granting to Earl Fitzwilliam the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, placing in his stead Earl Mansfield at the head of the Council-board, creating Earl Chatham Lord Privy Seal, and Earl Spencer First Lord of the Admiralty.

While the public mind was agitated by the anxious discussions which had taken place with respect to domestic transactions, and while the progress and increasing prosperity of an overwhelming foe, and the capriciousness, selfishness, and perfidy of different allies, threw a general gloom over the aspect of our foreign affairs, it was not difficult to create and sustain an impatient desire of peace, as well in those who saw without uneasiness the progress of the French, as those who, without much consideration beyond the present moment, caught at the word peace, as implying

the removal of immediate pressure, and the means of securing tranquillity and ease. The parties who were hostile to ministers, and had always avowed these sentiments, were now joined by others, not formidable in numbers, but respectable in character, who had supported the war at its commencement, in the hope that it would be terminated in one campaign, and who now did not wish to remove the present ministers, but were anxious to introduce measures which should urge them to make attempts at pacification.

In opening Parliament, his Majesty declared that, notwithstanding the disappointments and reverses experienced during the last campaign, he retained a firm conviction of the necessity of persisting in a vigorous prosecution of the war. The unexampled means employed by the enemy had produced, in the interior of their country, the progressive and rapid decay of their resources, and proved the instability of a violent and unnatural system, equally ruinous to France, and incompatible with the tranquillity of other nations. On the treaty entered into by the Dutch, he observed that no established government or independent state could, under present circumstances, derive real security from such negotiations: on our part, they could not be attempted without sacrificing both our honour and safety. He mentioned the acquisition of Corsica, and announced a treaty with America, in which it had been his object to remove, as far as possible, all grounds of jealousy and misunderstanding, and to improve an intercourse beneficial to both countries. He trusted that, under the protection of Providence, and with constancy and perseverance on our part, the principles of social order, morality, and religion, would ultimately be successful; and his people rewarded by the secure enjoyment of tranquillity at home, and the deliverance of Europe from the greatest danger with which it had been threatened since the establishment of civilized society.

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December 30.
Parliament.
King's Speech.

Of the tone and manner in which it might be expected the debates would be conducted, an early specimen was given. For the maintenance of its own

Bill for
preventing
clandestine
outlawries.

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Proceedings of
Mr. Sheridan.Observations
on the late
trials.

dignity and manifestation of its independence, instead of proceeding immediately on the consideration of the King's speech, it was usual to introduce into the House of Commons a bill for preventing clandestine out-lawries; a measure always considered merely of form. On the present occasion, Mr. Sheridan, in a manner which the Speaker declared not to be irregular, but which was deemed eminently strange and improper, said that the House, being called upon to advise his Majesty, at a time and in a situation the most extraordinary, critical, and alarming, could not perform this duty freely, fairly, and impartially, unless they themselves were free, which they could not be while the Habeas Corpus Act remained suspended. His object, therefore, was, after the question for reading the proposed bill should have been negatived, to move for one to repeal the Habeas Corpus suspension act.

This innovation on the accustomed form of proceeding produced a series of speeches, in which the chief aim of the opposition was to derive triumph from the late acquittals at the Old Bailey. The parties had been indicted, it was said, as authors of a treasonable plot, on which it had been maintained in that house that extraordinary steps ought to be taken. The verdicts of virtuous juries had demonstrated that there had been neither plot nor conspiracy.

To these observations, urged by Mr. Fox and Mr. Jekyll, the Solicitor-General returned the obvious answer, that the persons acquitted could not be again tried for the same offence; but the verdict by no means affected the general question. Mr. Tooke had admitted the existence of such a conspiracy, and the intention of calling together a British convention. One of their most eloquent speculative writers had said; "Let us obtain universal suffrage, and monarchy and aristocracy will be but as dust in the balance." Mr. Serjeant Adair, disdaining to shelter himself under the allegation of his duty as an advocate, avowed his full share in the conduct of the prosecutions, and his unequivocal responsibility. The acquittal of these persons no more proved their innocence, than a verdict in

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Mr. Sheridan
gives notice of
a motion.

favour of a housebreaker, highwayman, or pickpocket, would establish him as a man of pure and honourable character.

This extraneous conversation, for no regular motion was before the House, terminated in a sort of menace from Mr. Sheridan, that as every word he had heard from the other side had confirmed his opinion that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was intended to be continued, he should take the earliest day to bring forward the discussion; he would allow no time to concert plans for exciting alarm, make fresh false accusations, or marshal and arrange spies, but call at once upon ministers for their reasons for continuing to deprive the people of their dearest rights, after every honest man was convinced that the whole story of plots and conspiracies was nothing but a wicked fabrication.

Observation
on Mr.
Dundas.

Mr. Dundas having delivered his opinion, in the close of the conversation, Mr. Sheridan further impeded the business of the day, by noticing the right honourable gentleman as an illustrious stranger; he was a third secretary of state, and, by Mr. Burke's bill, was obliged, on being appointed, to vacate his seat, and was, therefore, no longer a member. Lord Grenville was one secretary of state: were Mr. Dundas and the Duke of Portland one secretary of state, or were they two? It was easily explained that the duties of Mr. Dundas were not at all varied by the new appointment; and in the Duke of Portland's office was transacted all the business within the home department of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies.

Mr. Pitt having intimated that Mr. Sheridan had endeavoured, by the former discussion, to inveigle and entrap Mr. Dundas into a delivery of his sentiments, that he might incur a penalty of five hundred pounds, Mr. Sheridan derided the notion of his practising on the honest simplicity and innocence of the right honourable secretary. To ease Mr. Dundas, who, on former occasions, had complained of the excess of business he had to perform, the great political Alcides,

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Mr. Fox.

he supposed, had been called in from Burlington House to give a little ease to Atlas.

No motion was made; but Mr. Fox terminated the conversation by saying that the spirit, at least, if not the letter, of the statute had been violated, and expressing his regret that the Duke of Portland, of whom he should never speak but in terms that became the respect he felt, from long political connexion and private friendship, had accepted an office, the abolition of which he had formerly supported.

House of
Lords.
Address
moved.
Amendment.

In the House of Lords, to an address on the King's speech, moved by Earl Camden, and seconded by the Earl of Besborough, the Earl of Guilford proposed an amendment, which, while it pledged the House to support His Majesty in maintaining the honour and independence of the Crown, and the defence and safety of the nation, advised him to take the earliest means of concluding peace with France, on reasonable and prudent terms, without consideration of the form and nature of her government. Sir Edward Knatchbull proposed, and Mr. Canning seconded, the address in the lower House; and Mr. Wilberforce, hitherto a supporter of ministers, moved an amendment, by which, after assurances of supplies and support, the House should represent that, upon full consideration of all the events and circumstances of the war, [of some circumstances that had lately passed in France*] and the negotiations entered into by the States-General, it was advisable to endeavour to restore peace. This amendment was seconded by Mr. Duncombe.

House of
Commons.

As the course of argument pursued in both houses was similar, a general summary will suffice; in fact, nearly all the observations, except those which arose from recent and peculiar circumstances, were a revival of those which had been uttered on former occasions.

Middle party.

On the subject of the war, the supporters of the address were embarrassed by Mr. Wilberforce, and

* On a subsequent motion for amending the amendment, these words were expunged.

those who followed him, forming what was termed a middle party, opposing ministers, without adhering to the opposition. Few as they were, Mr. Fox rejoiced that truth and reason had at length found their way into some minds. It would have been strange, if, while so many had separated themselves from him on account of his political opinions, none should have been found to adopt them. The military transactions could not afford comfort, or dispel the melancholy gloom that surrounded us. If it were true, as had been said, that we had raised the finest armies that ever were seen in any war, what a libel on ministers! What became of these armies? They were to be seen no where; they were gone to God, and were no longer to be found among men. They had been squandered; sent here and there without plan, without co-operation or principle, and were at this moment almost extinguished. In every corner of the earth, what was our condition? In the West Indies it was too melancholy for contemplation. Our armies were recruited by old men and boys; our grenadiers were invalids, while, on every side, we saw striplings in uniform, who had just quitted their Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and were astonished to see themselves metamorphosed into captains and colonels. The success and valour of the French were vaunted in most flattering terms.

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1794.
Mr. Fox.

On the altered opinions of some of his friends, Mr. Pitt observed, that, considering how they had contended at the beginning of the war against the new and monstrous systems of cruelty, anarchy, and impiety, he could not have expected from them the proposed amendment. It had pleased an inscrutable Providence that the power of France should triumph; but were we therefore to fall without an effort to resist it; to sink without measuring its strength? The misfortunes of the last campaign were not imputable to ministers, but to the defection of allies, and the unparalleled exertions and irresistible force of our enemies. It was said that the cause for which they were fighting would animate the French and render them invincible; but he should be sorry, if we could not

Mr. Pitt.

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do for the best of all causes what the French could do in support of every thing the most flagitious. It was not the character of the English easily to despond, nor had our soldiers and sailors shewn any inferiority in courage. Perseverance and invincibility were their characteristics; and he exhorted the House, in this respect, to imitate the French, who (to do them justice), in all their domestic contests, never forgot the cause of their country.

Mr. Fox.

Our acquisition of Corsica, Mr. Fox observed, was curious. If it was valuable to the enemy, or important to us, we might fairly have taken possession of it by right of conquest, as we had of the West India islands; but we had done it in a way that illustrated the doctrine in Dr. Price's sermon, so much noticed by Mr. Burke. His Majesty was once king of North America, but had been cashiered; in Corsica he had been elected; so that the doctrine of electing kings, and cashiering them for misconduct, was not matter of dangerous theory, but of approved practice. Sir Gilbert Elliot convened the primary assemblies; they chose delegates, who met, with various other persons; and all who came had voices, so that the election was very like universal suffrage. The people had been, not only allowed, but invited, to change their form of government; the people, or rather the rabble and Sans Culottes, of Corsica, had put the crown of their kingdom on the head of George the Third. Ministers had acted on the famous decree of the Convention, holding out protection to the inhabitants of all countries who should make efforts to deliver themselves from the yoke of the government under which they lived. Writings of Necker and Volney were adduced, to shew that, as a possession, the island was of no value, and it was said to be capable of producing nothing but expense and patronage.

Answer.

On these latter objections, it was observed that this supposed valueless island had been the object of long desire, and of a protracted, expensive, and bloody war, to France. It certainly was not a possession for a king in an opera or a fairy tale; not situated in a

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lake calculated for pleasant water parties, but in the middle of a boisterous and stormy sea: there were ports which would afford shelter for men of war, protection to merchant ships, and a rendezvous providing facilities to commerce. Was it by revenue and cultivation alone that a British statesman should estimate the value of possessions? The nett revenues of Minorca, or the territorial productions of Gibraltar, never equalled their expense; yet when, on a negotiation for peace after an unsuccessful war, a cession of the valued fortress was only suggested, the whole nation felt that, whatever sacrifices might be made elsewhere, that barren rock was not, on any terms, to be relinquished.

The afflictive events attending the termination of the independence of Holland had not taken place at the time of this debate: their certain and imminent approach was felt by all; but although many topics were introduced into the debate, which afterward became themes of separate motions and discussions, they did not at present form a prominent feature.

Both amendments were rejected by large majorities*; but ministers had the mortification to count in the division against them several of their supposed firm adherents, such as Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Bankes, Sir Richard Hill, Mr. Mainwaring, and Mr. Burdon.

Amendments
rejected.

In cautioning the country against the dangers of peace, Mr. Windham observed, that if the intercourse between the two countries were opened, the French would pour in their emissaries, and all the English supporters of French principles, whom we had now the means of excluding, would return to disseminate their abominable tenets. A Jacobinical club would be erected at the door of every man of property; an inquisition instituted respecting his right to it; and a convention might be even established in the neighbourhood of that house. The seditious societies, he added, had been formed by persons infected to the bone with French principles, and intent on the subversion of the British constitution. It was said the

Speech of Mr.
Windham.

* In the Lords, 95 to 12. In the Commons, 246 to 73.

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members were innocent, because acquitted by the verdict of a jury: gentlemen exulted, and he "wished" "them joy of the innocence of acquitted felons." For this most indiscreet expression, he was immediately called to order, and, in explanation, said he did not mean to arraign the verdict of a jury; he intended only to say that the acquittal by no means proved that they were free from moral guilt: the evidence, in his mind, established the direct contrary. Mr. Fox, while he declared the phrase extremely reprehensible, gave proper credit to the explanation. Those who supplied the streams which fill the channels of public opinion did not exercise the same lenity; but the words "acquitted felon" and "perish commerce" were perpetually reproduced whenever it was thought advisable to vituperate Mr. Windham.

1795.

January 5.
Mr Sheridan's
motion on the
Habeas Corpus
Act.

All matters connected with the late trials were fully discussed when Mr. Sheridan, according to his promise, moved for leave to bring in a bill repealing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus. His speech was apparently the fruit of much study, and carefully arranged. He insisted that the preamble of the act, asserting that "a traitorous and dangerous conspiracy" "had been formed" was disproved by the late verdicts; and, having repeated the arguments and jokes already so often recited on the tumefied statements of dangers from the societies and the miserable inadequacy of their means, he noticed the expense of the prosecutions, which, in fees to counsel alone, would exceed eight thousand pounds, and paid a well-deserved tribute of applause to Mr. Erskine and Mr. Gibbs. The societies certainly exhibited instances of many gross and scandalous libels; they comprised some mischievous individuals intent on mischievous purposes; but others were impelled only by an enthusiasm which had actuated men of the purest minds. Of convention, citizen, and other phrases, in which they had affectedly imitated the French, the worst that could be said was, that they were contemptibly foolish. From the writings of eminent lawyers, he proved, what no man ever doubted, the high value and great import-

ance of the Habeas Corpus. He vindicated the proceedings of the society by recapitulating many expressions used by men of the most distinguished character: Lord Chatham's rejoicing that the Americans had resisted; the tears which Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox had shed over the fall of Montgomery, and their not exulting in the desertion of Arnold; the Duke of Richmond's avowed predilection for universal suffrage and annual parliaments, and his contemptuous disregard of the King's birth-day. "If," he said, "we make a boast of equal laws, let us have some retrospective hanging; and, whatever in that case may happen to me, his Majesty will at least derive some benefit, since he will thereby get rid of a majority of his present cabinet." Mr. Windham, on a former day, had said that no man in the country felt any distress from the pressure and calamities of war. Would he say this to the starving manufacturers of Norwich? Would he say it to the shivering poor of the metropolis, obliged to purchase a loaf at ninepence, and unable, from their enormous price, to obtain coals in that inclement season? Would he say it to the landholders, the value of whose property had, since the commencement of the war, been reduced one half? What could this language mean, unless he wished to drive the great body of the people to desperation? "When I heard the right honourable gentleman," he said, "call upon the country for increased exertions, I concluded that he would throw in his salary to the aid of the public fund, and live contented on his own splendid income. I supposed he would have persuaded his right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) to relinquish the revenue which he derives from the Cinque Ports, and to live on the six thousand a-year attached to his other appointments: that he would have persuaded Mr. Dundas to forego one of his numerous salaries; and the Marquis of Camden to give up some of the emolument which he derived from the tellership of the Exchequer, which will this year amount to fifteen thousand pounds." In aid of all this offensive personality, Mr. Sheridan be-

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stowed similar or even greater abuse on the persons and conduct of sovereigns with whom we were, or recently had been, in alliance; calling the King of Prussia a shameless and perfidious despot, a trickster and a tyrant; stigmatizing with similar virulence the conduct of the Empress of Russia; and in the usual terms describing the horrors of the French revolution as the inevitable offspring of their former government. The actions of the French at any time, but least of all in the hour of frenzy and of fury, provoked and goaded by the arms and menaces of surrounding despots, should not furnish an inference or ground on which to estimate the temper, character, or feelings of the people of Great Britain, who, although sensible of many abuses which disfigured their constitution, could not be insensible to its numerous and invaluable blessings.

Mr. Windham.

This vehement harangue was treated by Mr. Windham as an address not to the judgment of the house, but to the attention of those reporters whose publication of it would diffuse its circulation in quarters to which it was much better adapted. He would not enter into the general argument; but noticed the malignity, as well as the falsehood and misapplication, of some of the phrases which had been referred to. Foulon had been murdered in Paris, because he had been reported to have said "he would make the people eat grass," and who could doubt what would be the result, if, unfortunately for the country, they who repeated and perverted such phrases as "perish commerce," "swinish multitude," and "acquitted felon," could attain their desired ascendancy. Some of Mr. Sheridan's charges could no more be replied to than the scolding of a fishwoman in Billingsgate: he alluded to the acceptance of office by himself and friends. Could they have continued supporting ministers without joining them? Support, without responsibility annexed to it, would justly have been considered mean and dishonest; and as to saying that they who took an ostensible office, should have resigned its emoluments; the idea, often agitated, had as often been rejected by the best and wisest of men, and every at-

tempt to reduce it to practice had been regarded as a mean and paltry lure to popularity. "The late trials," he observed, "afforded, in the bare reading of the documents produced in evidence, a complete refutation of all the patriotic doubts and surmises relative to plots. This vaunted respect for the verdict of a jury," he said, "seems only applicable to those which acquit; when they convict, its whole nature is changed; the jury become, as by touch of magic, transformed into a packed set of hirelings. Thus, the same men who celebrate the jury who acquitted Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall, had before expressed themselves most harshly of that which condemned Watt and Downie, although their verdict was backed by the confession of the convict, in a state when every man's word was taken—on the point of death."

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1795.

Mr. Erskine argued, that if a general conspiracy existed, the guilt of Hardy was a mere corollary; for take away his correspondence from the evidence, and the whole fabric vanished. He was secretary of the most active and bold society; in fact, its founder: he was the first mover to the Convention in Scotland; whatever was done, he did; whatever was known, he knew; whatever was in contemplation, he contemplated. The cases of Horne Tooke and Thelwall afforded ground for similar observations; and, therefore, he maintained that the verdicts did establish the proposition that no conspiracy had existed.

Mr. Erskine.

Mr. Serj. Adair, in a speech, which was humorously described by Mr. Fox as resembling that of an advocate moving for a new trial, guarded the house against the fallacy that the act in question was a general suspension of the Habeas Corpus; it applied only to that one clause which related to high treason. He controverted the deductions of Mr. Erskine, shewing that if the first verdict had established the non-existence of a conspiracy, the other trials could not have proceeded. The arguments used to shew that the prisoners could not have been properly acquitted unless the jury were satisfied that there was no conspiracy, had made a very strong impression indeed on his mind; and, notwith-

Serjeant Adair.

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standing the verdicts, had gone a great way to convince him of their guilt.

1795.
Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox supported the motion with all the force of his commanding eloquence; and made many powerful remarks on the acquittals which had already been so much discussed. The debate was terminated by a remark from Mr. Sheridan, that he had no occasion to reply, as no argument had been adduced against him, and a solemn requisition to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to declare what would be the state of the country which he might think would restore the Habeas Corpus Act. To the sarcasm Mr. Pitt retorted, that if no argument had been advanced, it was because nothing had been adduced that could produce any; and as to the longer duration of the suspension, he could, without difficulty, pronounce that it would probably be necessary.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Pitt.

On a division, the motion was rejected by an ample majority*, and not one of those usually friendly members who had divided against the minister on the address, appears to have voted with the opposition.

Bill for continuing the suspension.

Considering that the act respecting which this motion was made must expire on the 1st of February, only one reason can be given for the expenditure of so much studied eloquence, that of prepossessing the public against its renewal. In ten days after the debate, the Attorney-General moved to bring in the expected bill. The opposition was slight, Mr. Sheridan deferring his resistance until an approaching call of the house; but Mr. Grey, viewing the matter differently, procured a division, to him rather unsatisfactory than unexpected†.

15th.

Debate on the second reading.

Mr. Jekyll.

A warm debate on the motion for a second reading produced little that was remarkable, except renewed violence, irregularity, and personality. Mr. Jekyll observed, on a speech made by the Attorney-General, that it consisted entirely of the old report of the secret committee newly hashed up, and of the evidence brought forward in the late trials, and contradicted by repeated decisions of juries. Mr. Lambton

Mr. Lambton.

* 185 to 41.

† 71 to 13.

said, we had read of the Long Parliament and of the Rump Parliament; possibly posterity might view a confiding Parliament in no better light than either; for a confiding Parliament it was which, giving the minister credit for his assertions, suspended the Habeas Corpus Act. Referring to the non-production of new facts to warrant the intended measure, he cited a sentence which was considered as containing every possible circumstance of a fact, "Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando." In a long descant on this theme, he re-introduced many of the well-worn pleasantries about the desperate villains who met in night cellars, exercised with knives and other such implements, planning nocturnal schemes, to the punctual execution of which they took solemn oaths, and the army of tailors exercising in a garret in Lambeth. He was against the bill, because it gave encouragement to the nefarious practices of those damnable fiends commonly called spies; for fiends of hell they were, both in their objects and practices.

Mr. Hardinge made some judicious observations; but, in general, the supporters of Government did not waste their efforts in repelling the arguments or retorting the insults of their opponents. The division gave to Government a strong majority*.

After two other ineffectual attempts to impede its progress, the bill passed†.

One, not very important or strenuous, debate arose in the House of Lords, on the motion for a third reading; no division took place; but some slight amendments were made, to which the Commons readily assented, and four lords signed a protest.

Peace with France, a subject amply discussed in the debates on the address, produced also several motions.

Earl Stanhope first introduced the matter, by requiring the House to declare that the country ought not, and would not, interfere in the internal affairs of France. The eyes of the people, he said, had been opened to their impending destruction. The French

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Other
members.

28th.
Bill passes the
Commons.
Feb. 3.
And the
Lords.

Motions for
peace.

Jan. 6,
By Earl
Stanhope.

* 239 to 53.

† The divisions were 68 to 11 and 62 to 4.

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had solemnly disclaimed the principle of interference in the government of other countries; they had an army of twelve hundred thousand men, completely disciplined, first by adversity and afterward by success; well armed, clothed and provided; the inhuman idea of starving them into submission must be abandoned from its absurdity; they would soon have, perhaps had even now, a fleet at sea infinitely superior to ours. Their finances were never so flourishing as at present; by confiscating of the property of the clergy and emigrants, they had collected four hundred millions sterling; and he detailed their copious wealth, not forgetting the plunder drawn from the church, and the gold and silver saints. If the assignats were at a depreciation of seventy-five per cent., and they had issued four hundred millions, they would still, by calling them in, leave a clear surplus of three hundred millions sterling untouched. In this vein, he talked of the paper of the French government, comparing it to that of the Americans, which, according to the words of an excellent author, had gone forth in the size of a snow-ball, and returned no bigger than a hazle-nut.

Lord
Auckland.

Lord Auckland commenced a masterly and statesman-like speech, by premising that, having been nearly a year separated from all official duties, and, during the latter part of that period, from all official communications, he had taken no concern in the events of the war beyond the general interest which had compelled him to advert to the progress of our calamities. If, in that period, the interior of France had exhibited scenes at which humanity shuddered, their armies and their councils had manifested great energy and ability, and it had been the inscrutable will of Providence that their efforts, although founded on, and maintained and maintainable only by, crime, should have the fullest success. It was much less what some were pleased to call "Republican energy and virtue," than the ill-combined and discordant conduct of the allies, which had brought us to our present position; the sad result was, that Europe was trembling on its basis: the

southern kingdoms feebly struggling to maintain a defensive war; the late Austrian Netherlands become part of France; and the independence of Holland, the protection of which had been a primary object of the war, in extreme danger; and in the West India Islands, the infernal policy of arming the inhabitants in a mass was extended to the negroes. If we looked to our naval power, we should see, it was true, a larger and more efficient force than Great Britain ever possessed in the second year of any war; yet, on the other hand, he was unable to shut his eyes against the increasing navy of the enemy; nor could he conceal from himself the possibility that the French naval force might soon derive new strength from an accession of Dutch stores, Dutch seamen, Dutch ships of war, and Dutch ports. From the commencement of the struggle, he had always been of opinion that this country had a just pretension to prosecute the war, not till she should obtain, but for the purpose of obtaining, indemnity for the past as well as security for the future; this claim of indemnity was, however, liable to be qualified, suspended, or even renounced, according to circumstances. He never would object to any pacific proposition, solely on the ground of its acknowledging a republican form of government in France. With reluctance he should ever consent to such an acknowledgment; but he had always thought it a possible event; at present it was more than possible. The war was not made to prevent France from giving to herself the constitution she might prefer; but to prevent her from giving to Great Britain, and her allies, all the wretchedness and horrors of a wild democracy; he was solicitous to avoid the two extremes, that peace might be had at any moment, or that it was utterly unattainable. The present leaders of the French republic were certainly less abandoned in principle, and less ferocious in manners, than the monsters who preceded them; but, by their successes, they might suppose that they had an interest in prolonging the war, or think it dangerous to bring back into France their own victorious armies. It might be contrary to the individual interest of the

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leaders of the day in France to make peace; but it had been seen that they were leaders only of a day; and the people at large must desire the return of tranquillity. France required repose; her inhabitants in general wished it; their finances were stretched to the utmost: their population, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and subsistence, all required peace. It was contradictory to all the inferences of common sense, that such a system of anarchical despotism should have subsisted during five years; but yet we were not to infer its permanence: Reason must at last prevail: the essential consideration was, whether we could in the mean time save ourselves from the ruin which was overwhelming so many other countries. Let the impossibility of maintaining the contest be demonstrated, and he would acknowledge that the moment was come for saying—"Oremus pacem, et dextras tendemus inermes!" But, thank God! that was not the case; and he could not doubt, that, whilst the revolutionary doctrines continued, every exertion should be made that might ultimately suppress them.

Peers who generally voted in opposition to government gave no support to the present motion; but the Marquis of Lansdowne intimated, and the Duke of Bedford promised, that others tending to the same purpose should soon be submitted to the House. In fine, Lord Stanhope found himself in a situation not new to him: he stood alone in a division against sixty-one peers, and his solitary signature was affixed to a protest of fifteen articles.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Grey moved a declaration that the existence of the present government of France ought not to be considered as precluding, at this time, a negotiation for peace. This debate lasted till five o'clock in the following morning, without much novelty in fact or argument. The mover began by deploring, in common terms, the lives and the money sacrificed in the war, and, from a former speech of the minister, drew the inference that nothing short of the utter ruin of the country would induce him to treat for peace. The recent disastrous events afforded

26th.
Motion by
Mr. Grey.

but an indifferent source of consolation to those who had predicted a counter-revolution, or who had relied on the ruined state of the French finances. The people detested the very idea of a monarchy; a republic, one and indivisible, would be their established form of government. The most exaggerated account of the probable debt of France carried it only to four hundred and twenty millions, while their landed property was allowed to exceed six hundred millions. They were now adding whole nations to their wealth, and had in their possession a bank, once said to be identified with that of England. But a people in a state of revolution, contending for their liberties and life, were not to be measured by common efforts; for while there was iron in the bowels, or grass upon the surface of the earth, there was no end to their resources. Their population amounted to one-sixth of all Europe: add to this the distracted and impoverished state of our allies, and then he believed that no man in his senses would think of success in another campaign; for it was clear, that, however desirable, it was impossible to conquer them. Our resources, undoubtedly, were very great; but, whatever we might think of ourselves, we had not, nor in the nature of things could we have, in the prosecution of this war, the energy and spirit of the French; for they must fight while there was a man or a shilling left.

In terms of derision and condemnation, he adverted to the state of our allies, the poverty of the Emperor, the insincerity of the King of Prussia, and the general impossibility of creating an effectual co-operation among other powers. We ought, under our present circumstances, to begin a negotiation; but his motion did not go to that effect; it was only to put the country in a negotiable state. The House ought to recollect that the French Convention had repealed the decree of the nineteenth of November, and followed that repeal with a declaration that they would never interfere with the government of any other country. Having adverted to the many motions proceeding from his side of the house, each of which had been made at a

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proper period, he supposed he might be asked, should we trust to the mercy of the French government? Certainly not: we were a great power, and had great resources; but that was an additional reason why we should put our affairs in a train for negotiation. If we did so now, we had the advantage of that power and of those resources; but should we exhaust them, and be at last compelled to negotiate, we should then indeed be at the mercy of the French. Were Hanover, the fertile plains of Lombardy, and the whole of Spain, added to their conquests, should we be less at their mercy than at present? Did the minister really believe that the people would submit for ever to be guided by such abominable policy? Did he really believe that, even at this hour, the war was popular? Did any man in that house believe it? He was confident of the contrary. If the House was really disposed to trust ministers with the further prosecution of the war, would they declare that they could trust their allies? Should an attempt to negotiate prove fruitless, the House would be unanimous, and the people unanimous, and we should prosecute the war with vigour; he himself should be ready to go into the field, to stand in the front of battle, and fall in the service of his country.

Mr. W. Smith.

Mr. William Smith seconded the motion; and, in what Mr. Pitt described as the longest simile he had ever heard, compared all the occurrences of the American with those of the French revolution; put in parallel, events, declarations, and persons; but his exactness was not such as to illustrate his subject, nor were his details calculated to establish any principle.

Mr. Pitt.

Anxious, as he said, to deliver his sentiments at an early period of the debate, Mr. Pitt entered into a full investigation of the whole matter in discussion, not merely refuting the objections of his opponents, but explaining the aims and intentions of government. There existed nothing, in the present state of the country or of Europe, to induce the House to depart from the sentiments recorded in their repeated resolutions, some of which he caused to be read, and with

which the present motion was utterly inconsistent. The restoration of monarchy upon the old principles had never been stated as a *sine quâ non*, preparatory to peace. While France abstained from interfering with the government of other nations, and until a direct and absolute aggression had been made, and hostilities actually commenced, his Majesty had maintained peace. He could not, however, assent to the doctrine, that the form of government in another country ought never to be considered as having any influence on the security of a treaty. Since the commencement of hostilities, there had never existed in France a government capable of affording any such security as should render peace preferable to the continuance of a difficult and hazardous war. In the termination of every war, there were two objects—reparation and security; but the great object was security; reparation being only an auxiliary, only a subordinate object. The whole question was narrowed to a single and a plain point—whether war, one of the greatest of human evils, was less painful, on the whole, than the dangers attending an insecure and dishonourable peace; whether the present circumstances of the internal state and government of France did or did not afford a prospect of sufficient security to make it wise on the part of this country to negotiate? We had seen the reign and fall of Brissot; the reign and fall of Robespierre; and now saw the prevalence of a system that was called moderatism. What were the particular grounds of permanence that ought to give us dependence on its stability? There was some relaxation of severity and terror; a moderation arising only from comparison. The Convention professed to have renounced the crimes and cruelties of preceding times; but had unanimity increased among them? On the contrary, there had never been stronger instances of opposition, distraction, and confusion. The present rulers might gradually draw a veil over former severities, and obtain, if not the good opinion and confidence, at least the acquiescence of the nation. Should such a change take place, and

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such an order of things arrive, through whatever road and by whatever means, if such stability and authority were given to their government as might afford grounds, not of certainty, but of moral probability, that we might treat for peace with security, then would be the proper time to negotiate. But supposing we did not look to the chance of a change, what assurance had we of the pacific disposition of the present National Convention. Did France make any professions? did she show any really pacific dispositions? They professed a desire of peace with some powers, in order more securely to ruin others. Their moderation was reserved for Holland; their vindictive propensities for Great Britain. It had been stated that the decree of the nineteenth of November was repealed, and that therefore the French no longer aspired at interfering with the internal government of other countries; but, in April 1793, they had decreed the penalty of death against any person who should propose peace with any country until it acknowledged the French Republic, one and indivisible, founded on the principles of liberty and equality. These principles, once recognized as the legitimate foundation of government, would be universal in their application, and amount to a confession of the usurpation and injustice of every other government. Should we run no risk of serious internal dangers by reviving and rekindling the embers of that faction which some members had supposed to be totally extinguished? A peace so precarious, would be one of watching, of inquietude, of distrust; merely a short truce, a state of partial inactivity and interrupted repose.

Mr. Pitt also exposed at length the misconceptions which had prevailed on the subject of finance, and spoke with firmness and decision of our ability to persevere in the contest. Although he opposed the original motion, he said he should conclude with moving peace. He would not be contented barely to negative the resolution; but would propose an amendment substituting that language which, in his mind, it became Parliament to hold as best adapted to the subject. It

Moves an
amendment.

was to substitute, for the original resolution, a declaration that Parliament was determined firmly to support his Majesty in the vigorous prosecution of the present just and necessary war, as affording, at this time, the only reasonable expectation of permanent security and peace; to rely on his Majesty's intention to employ vigorously the force and resources of the country in support of its essential interests; and on his desire, uniformly manifested, to effect a pacification, on just and honourable grounds, with any government in France which should appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries.

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After some intermediate speeches, in one of which Mr. Thomas Coke affirmed the desire of peace to be universal in the country, except among the immediate dependants of ministers, contractors, and jobbers, who profited by the war, and professed his great attachment to Mr. Fox, who, he was persuaded, would soon be called upon, by the public voice, to save the nation, Mr. Wilberforce said he did not accord in Mr. Grey's motion, which might be considered to imply that ministers should be obliged immediately to offer or to accept peace if offered; and the terms of the amendment, "such a government as should be capable of maintaining the relations of amity and peace," were indefinite. In fact, we had only a choice of evils: peace would certainly not be attended with so much comfort and security as under the circumstances of ordinary governments. The great danger apprehended from making it was the probable mischief to result from the efforts of our enemies to foment our internal discontent; but this would be averted by the general affection of the people toward government. He did not mean that an ambassador should be employed directly to treat for peace; but that a proper person should intimate our disposition to do so on equitable and honourable terms. He thought a counter-revolution more likely to take place in peace than during the continuance of war. The conflicting factions in the capital would severally endeavour to attach bodies

Mr. Coke.

Mr. Wilberforce moves an amendment.

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of the army to their cause, and dangerous dissensions would ensue. Great Britain, like every other nation, was too ready to enter into wars, and to carry them on too long; but it was our true policy to meddle with continental politics as little as possible. His amended motion was, "That the existence of any particular form of government in France ought not to preclude such a peace between the two countries as, both in itself and in the manner of effecting it, should be otherwise consistent with the safety, honour, and interests of Great Britain."

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox declared his preference of Mr. Grey's proposition to that of Mr. Wilberforce, but directed his vehement censures against the amendment of Mr. Pitt: it was unexpected; for he had pledged himself, three weeks before, to come to issue on the words of the present motion; but now he had proposed an amendment by which he was to avoid a direct decision, and delude the house by a little temporary unmeaning concession. He was undoubtedly a man of superior talents; but having directed them to delusion and quibbling, rather than to what was grand, manly, and open, he did not possess a mind equal to the exigencies of his position. He seemed only anxious, by a little evasive management for the day, to gain over a few votes of irresolute members; as if he could so alter the eternal nature of truth and falsehood; or to baffle expected petitions; as if, by lulling a few individuals into a brief continuance of apathy, he could extricate the nation from the deplorable situation into which he had plunged it. The present proposition went far enough to disgrace his new colleagues, but not to restore the confidence of the country. On the failure of the campaigns and the consequences even of occasional successes, Mr. Fox observed that whenever we had made the slightest impression or had the appearance of temporary good fortune, it was sure to be followed by, and perhaps to have produced, some dreadful revolution, accompanied with the horrors of massacre and devastation; but, on the contrary, whenever we had been defeated and forced to fly from their

territory, the French had never failed to subside into a comparative tranquillity, and to have their internal condition ameliorated. Thus, when the Duke of Brunswick had penetrated to within sixty miles of Paris, came the revolution of the 10th of August. When we were in possession of Toulon, the shocking and diabolical massacres at Lyons took place; but no sooner had we evacuated the place, than they began to make atonement for their scandalous devastations. Immediately after the battle of Fleurus, happened the fall of Robespierre; and certainly, in proportion as we had been discomfited and driven from them, the French had exerted themselves for their own deliverance from internal tyranny; and nothing could be more natural; for, animated by enthusiasm in the cause of liberty, they gave up, when attacked, every consideration to preserve their independence; but, when relieved from fear, they had as constantly thrown off their domestic tyrant.

Adverting to the consistency which the House ought to maintain with respect to its former declarations, Mr. Fox referred to Ockzakow; and, on the objection to our being the first to negotiate, he asked if it could be expected that the French government would be the first, when our ministers had twenty times said that no possible peace could be made while they continued in power? What would be the feelings of Englishmen, if, for instance, the Convention had declared that they never could treat until there should be a reform in our government? Yet such a declaration we had made toward France, and must do away the effect of our arrogant and impolitic expressions before we could have peace. Did he propose to enfeeble our means of exertion—to unman one ship—to disband one regiment? No; on the contrary, his proposition was to add vigour to the country. It was said that for the continuance of peace there was no positive security; we should have as much now as in any former period. Were it to take place, the French must disband their armies; and if the mighty machine,

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which nothing but the diabolical confederacy of despots had erected, were once stopped, it would be impossible again to put it in motion.

He called to the recollection of Mr. Pitt the memorable expression of his venerable father, that they should die on the last breach before they granted the independence of America; and that the first act of his own political life was to sign that very independence which his father had deprecated. Necessity had dictated the act, and he must now, in the same manner, retract his system with respect to France.

Mr. Dundas.

Without attempting to answer the general argument of Mr. Fox, Mr. Dundas observed, that it was only three weeks since the House had come to a determination to prosecute the war with vigour; and had any thing since happened to induce them to pass a resolution diametrically opposite? He did not wonder that Mr. Fox was so angry at the amendment; because, had his right honourable friend only negatived the motion, it would have been published, in every dirty newspaper in the kingdom, that ministers would treat with no government in France but a monarchy, and that the object of the contest was, the destruction of the republic at present established.

Divisions.

In finally settling the resolution, several divisions took place: first, it was proposed that Mr. Grey's proposition should be left entire; but that was negatived by a large majority*. Mr. Wilberforce's amendment on that of Mr. Pitt was next, in a similar manner, rejected†. Mr. Sheridan then moved a new amendment, by way of addition to that of Mr. Pitt, declaring the House not to be of opinion that there were circumstances in the existing government of France which precluded all negotiation, or rendered it incapable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries. This was also negatived, and the resolution, as framed by the minister, adopted.

Mr. Pitt's
amendment
voted.

On the following day, the Duke of Bedford pre-

* .269 to 56.

† 254 to 90.

presented to the House of Lords a motion similar to that of Mr. Grey; and Lord Grenville moved an amendment in the same words with that of Mr. Pitt. The debate, although animated, presented nothing new in substance; but the irritating personalities which distinguished the discussion in the House of Commons were in general avoided, although censures of the war, and of our allies, of ministers, their conduct and motives, were not spared. Two reverend prelates, Dr. Watson, Bishop of Landaff; and Dr. Barrington, Bishop of Durham, delivered their opinions on opposite sides*. The Bishop of Landaff observed that the justifiable occasions of going to war were few, very few, indeed; and, when the spirit of Christianity should exert its proper influence over the minds of those who constitute the councils of princes, war would cease throughout the Christian world. No war could be justified on any principle, either of revealed or of natural religion, until indemnity for past injury, and security against future aggression, had been demanded and refused; until every means of accommodation had been tried—tried with a sincere disposition for preserving peace, and tried in vain. After the unsuccessful efforts of Prussia and Austria in the first campaign, nay, at any period before we had actually broken our neutrality, we might have interposed our good offices between the contending parties, with great propriety, and with great probability of effect. The war had not arisen from a confederation of princes to dismember France and annihilate the liberty of Europe; the King of Great Britain would not, either directly or indirectly, have consented, and the minister was incapable of either proposing or patronizing a project so nefarious. The war was begun by the princes of the Continent, and entered into by ourselves, to stop the propagation of democratic principles. He expatiated on the nu-

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27th.
The Duke of
Bedford's
motion.
Amendment.

The Bishop of
Landaff.

* "Though I had been told by one of my brethren," the Bishop of Landaff says, "that the King had expressed his dislike of bishops interfering in political matters, I was not deterred by the fear of his Majesty's displeasure from making a speech in the House of Lords in support of the Duke of Bedford's motion. I was the only bishop who did, either by vote or speech, support this motion; and I do not repent of my singularity, for it was a motion, at an early period of the war, for peace." *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 1.

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merous blessings enjoyed under our constitution, to shew that there was no body of men, aristocratical or democratical, churchmen or dissenters, which would wish to exchange our assizes and our sessions for revolutionary tribunals; our houses of Parliament for committees of legislature and general safety; our beloved monarch for a Robespierre.

On the political circumstances of France, and on the prevailing contempt of religion, the Bishop made many observations, and expressed a full hope, a full expectation, grounded on some knowledge of the Scriptures, that this abandonment of all religion in France would be followed in due time, in the time known only to the Ancient of Days, by the establishment of a purer system of Christianity than has ever taken place in that country since the age of the apostles. Finally, his opinion was, that we should make the most vigorous preparations for war by land, and especially by sea; that these preparations should be accompanied with a real disposition for peace. Thus prepared, and thus disposed, we might boldly say to France, "Peace or war; take your choice."

Bishop of
Durham.

Much more concise was the speech of the Bishop of Durham. The noble Duke, he said, had expressed a hope of support from the bench on which he had the honour to sit, founded on the humanity of his motion, and its tendency to stop the effusion of human blood. Could he persuade himself that such would be its effect, he would be among the first to concur in it. As a friend to peace, as a minister of peace, he was anxious to obtain peace, whenever it could be obtained with honour and security. To treat at a moment like this, with an enemy flushed with an almost unparalleled rapidity of conquest, would betray a weakness of force and resources which did not exist, and increase their hopes, already sufficiently sanguine, of adding Great Britain and its dependencies to their too widely extended empire. For one drop of blood which would be shed while we were prepared and on our guard, torrents would flow as the unavoidable consequence of the torpid inactivity which would seize all ranks of

men, on the supposition that overtures of peace would terminate in tranquillity; and on the subsequent necessity of repelling the invader, and fighting for our property, our lives, our sovereign, our constitution, and our religion.

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In favour of the motion, the Marquis of Lansdowne spoke with his usual extent of information, force of argument, and clearness of arrangement; he was supported by the Marquis of Abercorn and the Duke of Leeds. On the other side were Lord Hawkesbury, Earl Spencer, the Earl of Hardwicke, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Auckland. The amendment was carried by a large majority*.

Motion
rejected.

At an advanced period of the session, Mr. Wilberforce moved for a declaration of the opinion of the House that the present circumstances of France ought not to preclude government from entertaining proposals for a general pacification; and that it was for the interest of Great Britain to make peace, if it could be effected on fair terms, and in an honourable manner.

May 27.
Mr.
Wilberforce's
motion.

On the subject of war, it appears that Mr. Wilberforce had always been a hesitating and undecided supporter of the minister; and although he entertained a high opinion of his integrity and talents, and had long lived with him on terms of intimate private friendship, their difference on this subject enlarged by degrees, and extended, at last, to an open separation, although not attended with the usual displays of party hostility†. At the period when this motion was produced, no result could be expected, unless it were to shew to what numbers an opposition to the ministers might be carried, when, to the usual members of that party, were joined a few who had formerly been their supporters. The mover said, an opinion had of late very generally prevailed, that ministers were either actually negotiating, or purposing to negotiate, a peace. Without going the length of saying, *Vox populi, vox Dei*; he would maintain, that the general opinion of a people

* 88 to 15.

† *Life of William Wilberforce*, by his Sons, vol. ii. p. 10.

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was entitled to a great degree of respect. Several powers, he observed, had made peace with France, without acknowledging the republic as founded on the rights of man, or signing their own deposition; and he dwelt on the military force of France, both with reference to its positive increase, and the defections among the allies; the depreciation of their paper did not weaken their resources; bread was cheaper with them than in England; a general satisfaction prevailed on account of the pacification of La Vendée and the Chouans; and whatever partial or temporary tumults might occur in Paris, the expectation of a general rising seemed at an end. The true policy for this country would be, to cultivate our domestic resources, to consult the happiness, the morals, and the comfort of the lower orders, to excite their confidence in administration, and to abstain from continental connexions.

Mr. Windham.

Mr. Duncombe having seconded the motion, Mr. Windham observed on it as most extraordinary, both in itself, and in relation to the sentiments and declarations which had formerly been adopted by the mover and seconder, in conjunction with a great majority of the House. Mr. Wilberforce now seemed to think, that the moment a treaty was signed, we should be at liberty to disband our armies; prosperity would of course return, and we should immediately enter on a career of tranquillity and affluence. He depicted Mr. Wilberforce as a sort of Constitution-monger; on a former occasion he had said that he would give to France the same constitution as that of America; he would give them a constitution, as if every government did not grow out of the habits, the prejudices, the sentiments, and the affections of the people. He would give them a constitution, as children, who had surrounded a twig with a quantity of dirt, would think they had planted a tree. What change had taken place in the government of France? It was said to be moderate; but how? only in comparison with the preceding plans of terror, murder, and proscription. Compared with other governments it was still distinguished for injustice, violence, and insult.

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Was it to be treated as a matter of slight report, that the mob had broken into the august body of the Convention ; that the members had been forced to fly ; that the head of one had been cut off ; and that, with it in their hands, the mob had addressed a speech to the President ? Little hope would be entertained of the permanency of such a government ; and nothing but such motions as that now brought forward could prevent a speedy termination of the present contest. They could tend only to lay England prostrate at the feet of the enemy, who, in a report lately delivered to the Convention, stated, “ that they would make no “ concessions nor offer any terms of accommodation to “ Great Britain. They were determined to continue “ the war until they had reduced the pride and power “ of this haughty country.” He did not believe that discontent was really, however it might ostensibly be, appeased ; and if we had acted with becoming caution, instead of an isolated La Vendée, we might have known that the whole of France was becoming one entire La Vendée. With much force he attacked Mr. Wilberforce on his inconsistency and rashness. He was the friend of the minister, and had pronounced many eulogiums on him ; professed reliance on his talents, his integrity, and his judgment ; praised his general capacity, and esteemed him the properest person to be at the head of affairs ; but, with all these great qualities, he was not fit to conduct the business of the state, and therefore the honorable gentleman proposed to take that task upon himself. After some further observations, applying rather to the mover than to the motion, and a remark that Great Britain had no wish to imitate the Republic of Holland or the Duchy of Tuscany, but left to them the reward of their virtue, Mr. Windham concluded a speech of great eloquence, wit, and historical learning, by moving the order of the day.

Mr. Fox, censuring the personalities of Mr. Windham, referred to his own change of opinions and to his present position in the house, as contrasted with his former votes and declarations. He cited the Irish

Mr. Fox.

propositions, and Ockzakow, as a proof that the minister could by a minority be compelled to renounce a measure to which a majority had assented. He expatiated with unmitigated disapprobation on our conduct to neutral powers, and noticed the insincerity of our allies. Of the court of Berlin he was not certainly inclined to be the panegyrist; but the least objectionable part of its conduct was the conclusion of a treaty with the French Republic. It had been asked what had Holland gained by her disposition to negotiate early in the war? what, he would ask, had Holland gained by the protection of the allies? the spectacle of the retreat of the British troops through her provinces, and the necessity of treating, with a French army in possession of her country. Of our conquests in the West Indies, nothing remained but a single post in Saint Domingo, another in Saint Lucie, and the island of Martinique; and were these precarious acquisitions worth the hazard to which we had exposed all our other possessions in that quarter? If he were, as he had once been called, the advocate of Russia, he would say that she had contributed more than her share to the purposes of the grand confederacy. Aided by the arms of Great Britain, she had completely extinguished Jacobinism in Poland; and this was all she would do. Mr. Windham had said that Jacobins alone cried out for peace. No: the industrious manufacturer, overloaded with taxes, cried aloud for peace. The Jacobins, as those men were termed who wished for a radical reform, looked on ministers as their best friends, and relied only on a continuance of the war for a full attainment of their favourite object. Six years, he said, had now elapsed since the memorable era of the French revolution. He had, in the first instance, given it his commendation; as it had overthrown the tyranny of the Bourbons, he deemed it a glorious event; but his approbation did not include a sanction of subsequent acts. He approved of the resistance made by the Parliament of 1645 to Charles the First; of the conduct even of Cromwell, in the first instance: but, although it was impossible to com-

pare that great man with those who had raised themselves to power in the French revolution, was it to be inferred that he approved of Cromwell's usurpation, any more than of their cruelties? He renewed the often-repeated comparison between the present and the American war, and maintained that the existing government of France, however unstable it might seem, offered more security, from the publicity of its councils, than could be expected from the dark secrecy of any despotism; and there was as much cause to expect fidelity from the French, as from any of the princes of Europe.

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To this harangue, Mr. Pitt made a temperate answer, in which it plainly appeared that, although not disposed at the present time, he expected soon to be enabled to enter on a negotiation. On the subject of Holland, he maintained that it was of immense advantage to Europe in general that it was not added to France without a struggle; the event, but for the interference of this country, would have taken place two years ago. It arose from the people having indulged in unfounded hopes of peace, in a treaty of alliance which ended in their being invaded and conquered; they submitted, under promises of protection, and were defrauded of four millions of money. He trusted that when Mr. Fox attributed to the present government of France a resemblance to the British constitution, it was not meant that the interests of Great Britain were to be discussed in one popular assembly; nor was it worth while to examine whether a despotic government or an anarchical republic most nearly resembles our constitution, which is equally distant from both extremes.

Mr. Pitt.

From a review of the state of this country and of the enemy; considering attentively the state of the Continent, the bankrupt finances, and the prodigal expenses of France, amounting to twenty-seven millions sterling in one month, or a sum greater than the whole national debt of England in a year; he concluded that he hoped for a more favourable order of things, and had no reason to be satisfied with any attempt at

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negotiation at this moment; but by a vigorous prosecution of the war for a short time longer, we had every reasonable prospect that we should be able to procure for ourselves a solid, permanent, and honourable peace.

Lost.

Mr. Wilberforce made a short reply; and, on a division, the House passed to the order of the day*.

June 5.
Motion of
Lord Lauderdale.

One more attempt on the subject of negotiation was made by Lord Lauderdale, who moved a long address to his Majesty, recapitulating many circumstances and events since the commencement of hostilities, and representing a sincere and irresistible conviction that the sense of the nation with which his Majesty was engaged in hostilities, as well as the disposition of its present government, afforded a favourable opportunity for negotiation; and that an ardent and universal wish for the restoration, on fair and honourable grounds, of the blessings of peace, openly avowed by many of his allies on the Continent, pervaded with equal influence the minds of his Majesty's subjects at home. The noble mover, declaring that he would not refer to any of those former discussions on the subject of the war, respecting which there had been considerable difference of opinion, and there being little or nothing that was new to advance, the debate was limited to three short speeches by Lord Grenville, Lord Guilford, and Lord Mulgrave, and the motion was rejected†.

March 24.
Mr. Fox's
motion for a
committee on
the state of
the nation.

Some of the arguments used in these discussions had been anticipated, and many were repeated by Mr. Fox, in moving that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the state of the nation. Such motions, he admitted, though frequent, had seldom been effectual, and adverted particularly to one of his own during the American war‡. Much dissatisfaction existed in the country, he said, not arising from the influence of French principles, but from the natural effect of a system which had produced so much misfortune and disgrace. There was not a mere majority, there was an almost unanimity in favour of loy-

* 201 to 86.

† 53 to 8.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 495.

alty; but still there was a daily increasing dissatisfaction, not manifested by plots and conspiracies, but arising from the idea that the House of Commons was not even virtually the representative of the people, neither guarding their rights nor superintending their interests. The enquiries he proposed for the committee were various and extensive, comprising every matter connected with war, finance, and the internal state and government of the country. He called to recollection his Majesty's speech from the throne, in January 1794, when the successes obtained by the arms of the allied powers were referred to, as the pledge and earnest of still greater advantages, and almost expressly assured us of the empire of the sea. "Oh, the little foresight of presumptuous man! Oh, the fallacy of human hope!" he exclaimed. "Every pledge of success, every topic of consolation held out in that speech is now converted into a circumstance of defeat, into an argument for despair!" In the course of a year ushered in with so much promise, the enemy had been masters of the sea for two months, and eight hundred and sixty of our ships had been taken. We had lost the fortresses on the French frontier; we had lost the Austrian Netherlands; we had lost Holland; and the trade of England had been greatly injured. He concluded with some very strong reflections on the state of the government of Ireland.

Mr. Pitt deprecated the discussion of the internal affairs of that country in a British House of Parliament; and, having made a few observations on former decisions respecting the war, moved an adjournment, which, after some debate, was voted*.

A similar motion, made in the upper house, by the Earl of Guilford, was also rejected†.

To satisfy existing demands and to afford the means for future exertions, the Emperor was obliged to obtain a loan of four millions. A royal message to the House of Commons stated the efforts of our ally, and that the proposed accommodation would enable him to employ against the enemy a force of two

30th.
Motion by the
Earl of Guil-
ford.
February 4.
Imperial loan.

* 219 to 63.

† 104 to 14.

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5th.
Mr. Pitt moves
an address.

hundred thousand effective men: temporary advances which had been made to the close of the last campaign would be included in the arrangement.

Mr. Pitt moved an address, assuring his Majesty that, when informed of the result of the negotiation and the arrangement relative to the temporary advances alluded to, the House would consider the subject with attention; and expressing their strong sense of the advantage to be derived from the vigorous co-operation of a powerful Austrian army.

In producing his motion, Mr. Pitt observed on the admitted impossibility of procuring peace at the present moment, while extensive and powerful exertions had been recommended even by those who advised a negotiation; and we were contending with an enemy whom we had never so successfully combated as when our maritime strength had been aided by the judicious application of a land force on the Continent, which by this loan the Emperor would be enabled to supply. From the declaration of Tallien and other commissioners and members of the Convention, it appeared that the exertions of France could not long be supported, unless the immense mass of their paper currency was reduced: since that declaration was made, the pressure had increased tenfold; and we ought to compel them to continue on the same scale of exertions which this supply would enable the Emperor to make. He insisted that the bad faith of Prussia with respect to a former loan should not affect the present question; for, if pressed to its full extent, it would oblige us to renounce all alliance, and would expunge every treaty from the annals of nations. Austria had generally been faithful to her engagements; and now, under the pressing calls of interest and honour, required most strenuous efforts to prevent the French from retaining possession of the Low Countries, and their encroachments in Germany, and conquests in Italy. Having stated the deposits and securities which the Emperor was to give, Mr. Pitt said, "If, after all, it should be asked, was there no risk, he could not make such an assertion; but it could never be main-

“tained that a consideration of risk should counteract every probable ground of hope, and that incurred by the present measure was greatly overbalanced by the advantages likely to result from it.”

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In combating these observations, Mr. Fox referred to his arguments of last year against the Prussian subsidy, and cautioned the House against giving credit to accounts of the decay of the French resources: they might fail; but it was the great business of the House to take care that those of England should not fail in the contest. Before the House voted a sum of money so enormous, the minister ought to give some account of the conduct of the Austrians before Tournay; to assign some reason for their precipitate evacuation of the Netherlands, and that, too, against every remonstrance of the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces. The defence of the King of Prussia, as well as all hope of his future aid, was now given up: his only real object had been the partition of Poland; and might not this be the case with the Emperor, who also had views on that devoted country? The two manifestoes issued by the Prince of Saxe Cobourg, on the defection of Dumouriez, were not less iniquitous than any act in all the reprobated conduct of the French. If, upon the credit of this country, the sum was raised; on this country the payment of it would ultimately fall; and he moved an amendment, limiting the address to the assurance that the House would pay attention to the message, but suppressing expressions of acquiescence or promises of support. After a few words from Sir William Pulteney, the amendment was negatived*, and the address voted.

Mr. Fox.

Before the arrangement for completing this treaty could be perfected, a great change had taken place in the state of the German Empire. The Diet at Ratisbon having passed resolutions in favour of peace with France, the Emperor, as head of the assembled body, declared that all his wishes and efforts had tended only to the attainment of that end; but represented the difficulties which surrounded the attempt. The

The King of Prussia makes peace.

February 10.

* 173 to 58.

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April 5.
May 4.

King of Prussia next announced that he had concluded a separate treaty with the Republic, and recommended to the whole body a speedy pacification; and the Emperor declared, that although disappointed by this conduct, yet, in compliance with the wishes of the empire, he was busily employed in measures to accomplish the same object; and, in a rescript to the Diet, admonished them of their duty to unite with their chief: the system of detached pacification must produce inevitable anarchy; and in that case, however desirous to support his allies, he must concentrate his strength within his own dominions*.

May 4.
Progress of the
imperial loan.

Under these circumstances was a convention signed between the Emperor and his Britannic Majesty, by which a loan of three millions was to be negotiated. The terms were equitable toward the borrower, and sufficiently advantageous to the subscribers. A sum of one million six hundred thousand pounds was added by other engagements, but to the same effect. In consideration of securing the dividends on this loan by Great Britain, the Emperor agreed to employ, in the ensuing campaign, at least two hundred thousand effective men against the common enemy, according to dispositions agreed on by a secret article.

22.
Communi-
cated to Par-
liament.
28.
Debated.

Mr. Fox.

The compact having been, by his Majesty's command, submitted to the House of Commons, was referred to a committee, in which Mr. Pitt moved a declaration that provision should be made for guaranteeing the payment of the dividends. Mr. Fox offered many objections to the augmentation of the loan after it had been first mentioned to the House, and reflections on the conduct of the Emperor during the late campaign; doubted his punctuality, in which, if he failed, we must pay the dividends; and were he to make a separate peace with France, we should have given four millions six hundred thousand pounds for nothing. He was afraid that all the hopes of the majority who supported the war were now in the insincerity of the Emperor as to his rescript. How could he come to the Diet with his rescript in favour

* State Papers in all the Collections.

of peace, and at the same moment open a loan with this country for carrying on the war? These observations were not answered; but the resolution was carried*.

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On the report of this resolution, Mr. Fox unsuccessfully renewed his objections; a bill was brought in conformably to the resolution, which the persevering leader of the opposition ineffectually moved to postpone for three months†.

June 3.

Bill brought in

In the upper House, one debate occurred on the third reading, when the Dukes of Norfolk and Grafton, with the Earls of Lauderdale, Guilford, and Derby, decried the loan as one of the most dangerous and destructive measures that the worst of ministers could have proposed in the worst of times. They predicted that the example of the King of Prussia would be followed by the Emperor, to whose supineness they attributed the disasters of the war. Lords Grenville, Sydney, Hawkesbury, and the Earl of Mansfield, treated with derision the argument, that, because the King of Prussia had shewn himself perfidious, the Emperor must follow his example; maintained that our guarantee of the interest on the loan was free from risk, and observed that, peace being at present unattainable, with any regard to future tranquillity or safety, the only question was, whether it would be better for us to continue the contest alone, or in conjunction with allies. The measure was carried by a great majority‡.

10th.

Opposed in
both Houses.

Carried.

The capital of the debt thus created amounted to £3,833,333. 6s. 8d. and an annual charge of £230,000, payable to the 30th of April, 1819§.

Amount of the
liability
created.

To supply the exigencies of the year, a loan of eighteen millions was required, and it was readily advanced, at an interest below five per cent., with the superadded condition, that if the loan to the Emperor,

Feb. 23.
Loan.

* 77 to 43.

† On the bringing up of the report, the division was 60 to 35; against the postponement of the bill, 55 to 29.

‡ 60 to 12. In the Parliamentary History, no notice appeared of this debate; it is derived from the Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. p. 222.

§ Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 347.

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Franking of
letters
regulated.

Hair powder.

Feb. 26.
Mr Wilber-
force's motion
on the slave
trade ;

which was then only in agitation, were effected, every subscriber of one hundred pounds to this, should be entitled to a third part of a hundred in the imperial loan. Several new taxes and regulations were required ; but only two of them demand notice. One affected the privilege of franking, being a diminution of the number and weight of the letters forwarded and received by members ; the other, an annual tax of a guinea on all who wore powder in their hair. This, it was calculated, would annually produce two hundred and ten thousand pounds ; but party-feeling first, and afterward a total change of fashion on the Continent, caused a general disuse of the ornament, and ultimately the tax became nearly non-productive.

Indefatigable in a pursuit which, on grounds of religion, morality, and policy, he considered of the highest national importance, Mr. Wilberforce renewed his attempt to obtain the abolition of the slave trade, by moving for leave to bring in a bill to effect it in a limited time ; and that his motion should be referred to a committee. Among other arguments in support of his motion, he stated, as a generally received axiom, that, from the sea coast of every country, civilization had gradually insinuated itself into the interior ; but two principal servants of the Sierra Leone Company, travelling three hundred miles from the sea, had found, in a city, containing seven thousand inhabitants, where the face of an European had never been seen, a state of society advanced some centuries beyond what they had left it on the coast. In this populous city, the strangers had been received with kindness and hospitality ; and the great men, confessing that wars were carried on for the mere purpose of making slaves, declared they should be most happy to obtain European commodities by means less destructive and more innocent. Regarding the matter in a religious point of view, " What," he asked, " could it appear, " but a mockery, to take our share in the solemnities " of a general fast day, and, with the language of humiliation and penitence in our mouths, to cling with " such earnestness to a system of greater cruelty and

“ wickedness than had ever insulted the forbearance
“ of Heaven ?”

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opposed ;

The motion was met by one to adjourn the question for six months. The arguments used applied less to the justice or propriety of the commerce, than the state of the times and the discretion of the mover. Mr. Whitbread censured the House of Lords for their slow proceeding, which he pronounced highly disgraceful. The Commons should force them to a decision, reminding them that they must not blink the business. In answer to this coarse attack, Alderman Newnham said, the conduct of the House of Lords did them honour ; they had exercised their constitutional right, in curbing the pernicious effects of a mischievous zeal.

Mr. Dundas wished to know how the Lords were to be forced ? The Commons might pass a bill ; but were the Lords obliged to sanction it, more than they were to agree to the resolutions formerly sent up ?

Mr. Fox, heartily supporting the motion, repeated an expression he had used in a former debate, “ Would they consent to regulate robbery, and methodize murder ?” Regulation appeared to him a sort of crooked policy, and a departure from the unalterable principles of morality and justice. Mr. Pitt also advocated the immediate abolition ; and, on the other side, Sir William Young, recapitulating his well-known, unchanged opinions, said, the colonists alone could carry any abolition into effect : and they were making rapid steps to it, by increasing the population, improving the medical treatment of infants, correcting the morals of the negroes, and, by drainings and cultivation, rendering the islands more salubrious. Thus, in a few years, the slave trade might have dropped, or sunk, at least, to a mere transport of African felons ; but the strong, unqualified measure now proposed, put aside all such salutary procedure, whilst in itself it was impracticable ; the very discussion was dangerous. Finally, the adjournment for six months was carried*.

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March 23.
26
Sir W.
Dolben's bill
on the
Sabbath.

A bill had been brought in, by Sir William Dolben, to amend the statute of Charles the Second, for the better observance of the Lord's-day; a debate took place on the motion for a second reading, not distinguished by much learning or wisdom, but marked with some circumstances of drollery, particularly on the part of Mr. Courtenay, who entertained the House with a quotation, or rather parody, of a passage from a work then little known or noticed, called *Barnabæ, Itinerarium*; or drunken Barnaby's four Journeys to the North of England.

Several members, among whom were Mr. Pitt and the Master of the Rolls, while they expressed disapprobation of the enactments, were yet desirous that it should go into a committee; and they prevailed by a small majority*; but, on a subsequent day, by a still smaller majority, this decision was reversed; the day for the committee postponed six months; and thus the bill was thrown out†.

Prophecies
of Richard
Brothers.

In the course of his speech, Mr. Courtenay adverted to the alarm and agitation occasioned by recent prophetic writings, alluding to the effusions of an insane enthusiast named Richard Brothers, a native of Newfoundland. He had been a lieutenant in the navy, where he was highly respected and esteemed; at the peace, he was put on half-pay, and, in the humble style of living which that pittance would afford, still maintained his character. His imagination became unsettled by perusing works of religious controversy; and many irregular, although not offensive or dangerous, actions alarmed those who interested themselves in his welfare. The first proof of a disordered understanding which he publicly displayed, was in renouncing his stipend, because he would not take the oath required on application for payment. Falling into extreme

* 44 to 43. Mr. Wilberforce was mortified at the failure of this, as well as of his own favourite measure; but he acknowledged the honourable consistency of Mr. Pitt, in assisting him so strenuously on the slave trade, notwithstanding the displeasure he felt against him for moving the amendment on the address. *Memoirs of Wilberforce*, vol. ii. pp. 48, 85. In this part of their work the Biographers have blended and confused the proceedings in two sessions of Parliament.

† 25 to 21.

distress from this conduct, the officers of his parish ascertained his insanity, and the Lords of the Admiralty were induced to dispense with the oath and issue his arrears. He attracted general notice, by publishing, in two parts, "A revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies "and Times;" in which he stated himself to be a descendant of King David; the friend and nephew of God; the chosen chief of the Jews, whom he was to reinstate in Jerusalem, and become himself the sovereign of the world. In support of these pretensions, he cited most absurd confabulations with the Deity, and intercessions, which, after a little reluctance, were complied with, for exempting certain statesmen, gentlemen, and one lady, from the destruction which, in a vision, he had been informed would speedily overwhelm the whole capital. These empty bubbles of a heated brain would, in the ordinary course of things, have met with no notice, except such an inquiry as was necessary to warrant the detention of the miserable maniac in Bedlam. To the King he addressed himself in these terms—"The Lord God commands me to say to you, George the Third, King of England, that immediately upon my being revealed in London to the Hebrews as their prince, and to all nations as their governor, your crown must be delivered up to me, that all your power and authority may cease." Of his delusion there could be no doubt; for he exhibited no signs of imposture; solicited no supplies or subscriptions; called no public meetings; formed no association; nor took any of the other methods by which pretended zealots and enthusiasts, both religious and political, elevate themselves in wealth and public estimation. He did not envelope his predictions in the mystery of distant time and remote accomplishment; but fixed the destruction of European governments at an early period, and the establishment of his kingdom in Jerusalem was to be accomplished by the year 1798. The Jews, to whom his promises might be supposed most alluring, evinced no desire to co-operate in realizing them; no body or

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society appeared in his behalf; but his prophecies became matter of discussion in the press; a belief in them was inculcated by men well versed in the Holy Scriptures; and some individuals, of superior talent and information, publicly declared themselves his proselytes; his abode was thronged with visitors of distinction, whose equipages crowded the street where he dwelt.

March 5.
He is sent to
Bedlam.

7th.

27th.

Motion by
Mr. Halhed.

Under these circumstances, it was deemed prudent to investigate his case, his conduct, and his motives. He was taken into custody by orders from the Secretary of State, charged with unlawfully, maliciously, and wickedly writing, printing, and publishing fantastical prophecies, with intent to create dissensions and other disturbances in the King's dominions. On his examination before the Privy Council, no signs of danger or even of malicious intention appeared; a commission to inquire into the state of his mind was issued, and, in conformity with the verdict of a jury, he was confined in Bedlam.

Had this been the end of the transaction, it would rather have appertained to a collection of anecdotes than to the history of the times; but it was recommended, in a most extraordinary manner, to the attention of the House of Commons. One of those, who, in defiance of reason and common sense, adopted, in all their extent, the visionary absurdities of this pretended prophet, was Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, member for Lymington. This gentleman had filled an important station in India during the government of Mr. Hastings; and, during the proceedings against him, was selected as one of his chief confidential advisers; he was a man of extensive erudition, not in oriental literature and antiquities alone, but in the usual course of classical attainments; he was not of a reserved, solitary, or gloomy turn of mind, such as usually leads to wild speculations on religious subjects; but, in the tone of a man mixing in good society, and taking a sprightly view of the follies and frivolities of life, had recently produced imitations of an ancient classic, in

which he alluded, with gaiety and spirit, to such individuals and subjects of the day as afforded scope for the display of satirical mirth and pleasantry*.

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March 31.

Mr. Halhed, then, moved that a copy of Brothers's book should be laid before the House; if he succeeded, he would next propose that it should be printed for the use of the members. His speech was not wild or enthusiastic, but temperate and firm; he professed a thorough belief in the prophecies of Brothers, derived from having followed his advice, in consulting the passages of Holy Writ to which he referred. Three weeks afterward, he again addressed the House on a motion for a copy of the warrant of the Secretary of State for apprehending Richard Brothers, and of the information on which it was grounded. Neither motion was seconded; so that they not only failed in producing debates, but are not even mentioned in the Journals. For these efforts, and several learned pamphlets which he wrote on this his favourite subject, Mr. Halhed received no reward in fame or public opinion; but he might derive consolation from the declaration of his protégé: "The Lord God commands me to say to you, Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, that, as you are reviled and considered by your former acquaintances as ruined and lost, for speaking the truth, as he manifested it to you; for publishing your testimony of me his servant, you shall, by the expiration of three months from this day, have your choice of being either Governor General of India, or President of the Board of Control in England; that all men may be convinced that he who rules in Heaven is able to exalt or to abase; that he is still able, even at this late hour of a wicked world, to reward the obedient to his blessed spirit, and give the most eminent places on earth to whomsoever he pleases†."

April 21.

* Imitations of some Epigrams of Martial, in four parts, 1793, 1794.

† This passage is transcribed from the second part of the *Revealed Knowledge*, &c.; and, at the time when Mr. Halhed last addressed the House, two months of the three were elapsed, and no appearances in the state of public affairs warranted an expectation that this prophecy would be accomplished. Trifling and absurd as all this matter must appear at the present day, it engaged much attention at the time. Beside the share which it occupied in daily and periodical literature, and beside the many essays that most probably have perished, I have now before me more than thirty pamphlets published on the occasion.

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1795.

Proposed marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Daughter of the Duke of Brunswick.

At the beginning of the session, his Majesty informed Parliament that a treaty was concluded for the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Princess Caroline, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick. He was persuaded that they would participate in the sentiments he felt on an occasion so interesting to his domestic happiness, and enable him to make provision for an establishment suitable to the rank and dignity of the Heir Apparent. The members of both houses who so strenuously opposed the address in other particulars, concurred in congratulations on this auspicious event; but the intended provision produced violent and acrimonious discussions.

March 24.
Her arrival,

A deputation was sent to Hanover to conduct her Serene Highness to England, where she arrived, after a tedious journey, delayed by the weather and various political incidents. The people greeted her with cordial acclamations; the Royal Family received her with every mark of affectionate regard, and the nuptial ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Chapel Royal at Saint James's*. His Royal Highness was in his thirty-third year; the Princess, who was endowed with many personal charms, was six years younger. Hope indicated honour, happiness, and national benefit, as the result of this alliance; the progress of disappointment is hereafter to be related.

April 8.
and Marriage.

Soon after the marriage, Mr. Pitt presented to the House of Commons a royal message on the subject of an establishment. He stated, with the deepest regret, that the benefit of such a settlement could only be effectually secured by freeing the Prince from incumbrances to a large amount, which it was proposed to effect by setting apart, for a given term, the revenues arising from the Duchy of Cornwall, with a portion of his other annual income; and provisions would be made for establishing regularity and punctuality of payment in the Prince's expenditure, and guarding against future embarrassments.

27th.
The King's
message for a
provision

* Ample details are in the *Annual Register*, vol. xxxvii. p. *113; and in *Memoirs of the Life and Times of George the Fourth*, by the Rev. George Croly, p. 237 to 245.

On a motion that this message should be referred to a committee of the whole House, Colonel Stanley desired that his Majesty's message of the twenty-first of May 1787 might be read, together with the address and answer*, and intimated the propriety of a call of the House. This proposal, at first depeccated by Mr. Pitt, was afterward conceded; but many harsh reflections were made on the nature and causes of the application. Mr. Grey, referring to the Prince's former solemn promise, said that to treat the intended grant as an additional income to his Royal Highness was a mere delusion. Were the debts at once discharged, and a tax created plainly, fairly, and specifically for that purpose, the public would see what burthens they were to bear for his Royal Highness. When the cries of the starving poor were assailing them on all sides, the House would not be doing its duty by granting establishments to princes, with a profusion unparalleled. He had heard much of the dignity of his Royal Highness, but thought he would best maintain his dignity by shewing a feeling heart for the poor, and an unwillingness to add to their distresses. He was afraid of proceeding, lest he should be betrayed into any thing that might have the appearance of disrespect.

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1795.
Motion on it
debated.

Mr. Grey on
the Prince's
debts.

Other members spoke of the pledge formerly given; and Mr. Sumner required that the amount of the debts should be defined: public rumours were very discordant; some rating them at £600,000, while others carried them to £1,700,000. Mr. Pitt answered that the total was certainly between six and seven hundred thousand pounds†.

Other mem-
bers.

A call of the House took place as proposed; and in a committee Mr. Pitt detailed the intended measures. At present, he observed, the annual income of the Prince was sixty thousand pounds, exclusive of the Duchy of Cornwall, which was about thirteen thousand; but, on looking back on the allowances made

May 14.
Augmentation
of income pro-
posed by Mr.
Pitt.

* Vol. iv. p 222.

† Afterward ascertained to be £642,890, of which £572,000 were upon securities bearing interest.

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1796.

to former princes, it would be found that, fifty years ago, his Royal Highness's grandfather possessed a nett income of one hundred thousand pounds. Eighty years ago, his great grandfather had a hundred thousand; both exclusive of the Duchy of Cornwall. His Royal Highness ought therefore to have a considerable addition to his income, even supposing that he was not incumbered with debt; and he proposed that it should be raised to one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds, beside the duchy, which would be only twenty-five thousand a year more than was enjoyed fifty years ago. This being the only vote he had to propose, he should merely state, in the nature of a notice, the intended regulations. The preparations for the marriage would be, £27,000 for jewels and plate, and £25,000 for finishing Carlton House. For the jointure of the Princess, he proposed £50,000 a year, being no more than had formerly been granted on a similar occasion. According to the most accurate accounts, his Royal Highness's debts, up to the last April quarter, were from £620,000 to £630,000. There were some in which he was security for his brothers; but, from the meritorious exertions of these two illustrious persons, those claims were put in a train of punctual discharge. Before any step should be taken toward the liquidation of the debts, they ought to undergo a rigid investigation before a secret committee, perhaps a parliamentary commission, empowered to administer on oath: from the income of £125,000 a year, £25,000 should be deducted for payment of interest at four per cent., and the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall appropriated, as a sinking fund, at compound interest, to discharge the principal, which would be effected in twenty-seven years. Having adverted to several contingencies, such as the death of the King, or of the Prince, by which the tenure of the Duchy of Cornwall might be changed, and suggested proper remedies, he moved that his Majesty should be enabled to grant, yearly, out of the consolidated fund, sixty-five thousand pounds toward providing for the establishment of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

Mr. Grey professed that there could be, in the house, but one wish—that of making for the Prince a suitable and liberal provision; but, in this time of unparalleled distress, they owed it as a duty to the Prince himself, to teach him, if reflection had failed to do so, that, as his family were chosen to the throne for the good of the people, so his situation was created, not merely for luxury and indulgence, but in subservience to that great end; and that, although they were bound in turn to consult his comfort and enjoyment, the obligation on their part ceased, if these became his sole objects. He proposed therefore, that, instead of £65,000, only £40,000 be added to his present income. As to the incumbrances, he should resist any claim, however minute. If a sum had been accumulated out of the savings of the Duchy of Cornwall during the Prince's minority; if a resource could be presented by a reduction of those trappings of state which incumbered monarchy without adorning it; or, lastly, if any aid could be derived from those great savings, which, during the indisposition of an illustrious personage, were represented as having taken place during the present reign; he was astonished that any application should be made with reference to those incumbrances. While it was proposed to apply a considerable part of his income to the liquidation of his debts, had any thing been done to diminish the scale of his expenditure? What, then, was the effect of this conduct, but to hold out an encouragement, or provide an excuse, for the incurring of new liabilities? they ought to give the Prince whatever income they might think suitable, and to mark their disapprobation of the debts, by a direct refusal to enter into any discussion on them. If the Prince were to retire to a situation, where he might qualify himself by reflection for the duties of his future station, after having made a composition with his creditors, who, no doubt, would be satisfied with easy terms, there would still, out of the income which he proposed, be left a sufficient provision for the ease and comfort of two persons, who had other resources in expectancy.

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1795.

Opposed by
Mr. Grey.

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1755.

Mr. Curwen.

Mr. Curwen disapproved of the Prince's conduct in contracting debts, but promised to vote for the larger sum. The country, he said, was unwilling to be charged with one penny of the Prince's liabilities; but, by refusing to extricate him, the House would subject him to insults that tended to lessen and disgrace royalty, and produce dangerous mischief. He therefore trusted that a sinking fund would be formed, by which the debts, in a reasonable time, would be liquidated. The Prince ought to relinquish his court, and retire, for a season, into privacy, to regain the good opinion and regard of the people. He approved of the commission to inquire into and settle the debts, wishing a veil to be thrown over them, and that the future conduct of his Royal Highness might justify an oblivion of the past; and he felt surprised that the minister had given no intimation of his Majesty's intention to take upon himself a portion of the burden.

Mr. Fox.

Premising his consciousness that what he should feel it his duty to say would be acceptable neither to the Crown, the Prince of Wales, nor the majority of the House or of the country, Mr. Fox delivered his opinions. The establishment of George the Second, when Prince of Wales, had been a mere matter of party; how much more that of his son, Frederick? His establishment had been £60,000 a year when he differed in political opinion from his Majesty's ministers; and £100,000 when he afterward agreed with them; and he deprecated a conduct that might expose any Prince of Wales to the suspicions which arose on that occasion. The former declaration of his Royal Highness, that he would give no occasion for a future application to Parliament, had surprised him not a little. He knew not who had advised it; but had he been afterward consulted on the subject, he would have said, that, being made, it was a promise which, for his honour, he was bound to keep. If, when the Prince was twenty-five years of age, £60,000 a year, in addition to the Duchy of Cornwall, was sufficient for his splendour, and for reinstating his discarded household, upon what principle was it now pretended, that

£125,000 was necessary? Marriage, in the lower classes of life, made a great difference in point of expense, but not in any thing like the same proportion among the higher ranks. His Royal Highness, before his marriage, had a house and a household. Did his marriage require two houses and two households? Mr. Fox also urged that the debts ought, in justice, to be paid by the King. On this subject, he cited the examples of Queen Anne, George the First, and his successor, and referred to the payment of his Majesty's debts, and the augmentation by Parliament of the privy purse, as furnishing reasons why a proportional augmentation should be made by the Crown to the establishment of the Prince of Wales. After many more observations on the Prince's promise in 1787, the absence of any security against future applications, and the provision for the Princess, who had been invited over by the unanimous consent and solemn pledge of Parliament and the country, Mr. Fox adverted to the Duchy of Cornwall. He was informed by persons of competent knowledge, that this property might be sold for £800,000; he would suppose for only £600,000. The Prince's life interest in it might be valued at £300,000, and that sum applied to the payment of his debts. The remaining £300,000 could be applied as might be thought fit: to the future provision for Princes of Wales, if Parliament was so attached to customs, merely because they were old, as to think it worth while to continue that whimsical sort of provision. He should approve of measures to prevent the contracting of future debts, if the plan was to be general; if it were to apply to the Prince of Wales individually, it would not be a mark of respect, but of degradation; if applied to all future kings and princes, it would have his hearty support. Why, he asked, had not his Majesty been advised to do something on this occasion himself? Was it for the interest of regular governments that monarchs should never appear to feel any portion of the public adversity: that they should grow rich as the public were growing poor? The Prince had not been fairly dealt with, as

Proposes to
sell the
Duchy of
Cornwall.

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1795.

Motion
carried.

June 1 to 17.
Bill
introduced.

June 1.
Message
from the
Prince.

Explanations
on the Duchy
of Cornwall.

to the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall, during his minority. What the Act of Parliament gave to him from his birth, had been applied by successive ministers to the purposes of the civil list. He would vote for £125,000 to the Prince of Wales, but would oppose taking any notice of his debts, unless a large fund for liquidating them were appropriated, according to his suggestion.

No detailed or elaborate answers were given to these arguments; but the House shewed its opinion of them in three divisions. The first negatived the amendment of Mr. Grey*; the second repelled a motion by Mr. Hussey, for the chairman to leave the chair†; the third assented to the original motion‡.

A bill, framed in pursuance of the resolutions of the committee, was strenuously debated during several days; amendments were proposed, adjournments moved, and divisions taken at every opportunity, but with an unvarying result. To specify the particulars, or pursue the whole train of objections and explanations would now be tedious and useless; some few points may be mentioned.

While the bill was before the Committee in a state of preparation, Mr. Anstruther, as his Royal Highness's solicitor-general, announced his earnest desire that the House would appropriate such part of his intended income as they should deem advisable to the liquidation of his debts. After a long debate, in which many reflections on extravagance, retrenchment, retirement, want of conduct, and insincerity, occurred, instructions were voted for framing the bill as suggested.

Mr. Fox, having renewed a mention of selling the duchy, not in a pecuniary sense alone, but as a diminution of the patronage of the Crown, Mr. Anstruther, not denying that Parliament had the power to order the Duchy to be sold, observed that it was not the absolute property of the Prince; for if he were to die, it would immediately vest in the Duke of York, and the House would have as good a right to order the

* 200 to 99.

† 248 to 99.

‡ 241 to 100.

estate of any individual to be sold as this. There had been much misapprehension as to its value; two-thirds of its produce were not rent arising from land, but a duty on tin, and the other part a dry, unimproveable rent. On this point, Mr. Sheridan observed, that the Duke of York certainly had a contingent property, and all subsequent princes would be injured; but the greatest part of the revenues was swallowed up in the collection; and it answered only the purposes of jobbing and court influence. The Duchy, although nominally of Cornwall, was ridiculously split and dispersed; we had Cornwall in Coventry, in Lambeth, and in Westminster; and, as a property, it could not possibly be less beneficial or productive in any other shape or figure.

In the discussion respecting the arrears of the duchy during the Prince's minority, the nature of the tenure and its value were more amply noticed. Mr. Jekyll intimated that no reason had yet been given why a resource might not be found in the sale of the crown lands. He conceived that the commissioners to be appointed by the bill must have powers to inquire into debts due to the Prince, as well as into those due by him; and that it would be their duty to inquire into the revenues of the duchy from his birth to his attaining the age of twenty-one, and sue for the amount if necessary.

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1795.

Mr. Jekyll
mentions the
arrears of the
duchy.

The Attorney-General said that if it were meant only that the Prince might dispose of his life estate, that was certainly true; but, on consulting the original charter, it would be found that he could not legally dispose of the fee simple: it was the property of the Prince of Wales for the time being; and no principle of justice could warrant a total alienation. Much learned argument ensued, in which the Attorney and Solicitor General and Mr. William Grant, after discussing whether the duchy was held by knight's service, agreed that it was of a nature peculiar and difficult to describe: it was only a fund appropriated by the original grant of Parliament for the maintenance

The Attorney-
General, the
Solicitor-Ge-
neral, and Mr.
W. Grant.

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1795.
Solicitor-
General.

of the Prince of Wales, who had properly been represented as "major a die nativitatis."

The Solicitor-General, concurring in the definition of the tenure, observed that the Prince's claim, if he had any, ought to be left to a court of law, a remedy to which it would not be for the Prince's honour to resort; and Mr. William Grant, supporting in a very learned speech the same opinions as to the nature of the estate, maintained that it was *bonâ fide* the property of the King until a son were born, and then he retained it at discretion, apportioning as much as might be needful for the education of the Prince, but appropriating whatever sums he pleased to his own use, until the formal possession was given to him. There was no trace of any account rendered on this subject; and to unravel the whole of this proceeding, would neither contribute to the character of the Prince nor to that of the Parliament.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Sheridan gave an explanation of the manner in which the embarrassments of the Prince had been created and increased since his former application to Parliament. In 1787, the sum paid for him was £160,000; of this, £60,000 was for Carlton House, and £80,000 more was voted to complete the building; and the correct application of the money had been proved to the satisfaction of a committee appointed purposely for the investigation. In 1787, a pledge was given to the House that no more debts should be contracted; and the Prince was bound by it as much as if he had given it knowingly and voluntarily. To attempt any explanation of it now would be unworthy of his honour; as if he had suffered it to be wrung from him with a view of afterward evading its effect by pleading that it was against his better judgment. He had then advised the Prince not to make any such promise, because it was not to be expected that he could himself enforce the detail of a system of economy; and, although he had men of honour and abilities about him, he was totally unprovided with men of business adequate to such a task. He (Mr. She-

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1795.

ridan) had drawn up a plan of retrenchment, which was approved of by the Prince, and afterward by his Majesty; and the Prince told him that the promise was not to be insisted on; but the contrary afterward appeared. By the plan then settled, ministers had a check upon the Prince's expenditure which they never exerted, nor enforced adherence to the plan; and in so far they were to blame, and not the Prince. In the expenditure on Carlton House; they were still more censurable; for, with complete authority, they had never interposed to stop a most extravagant and useless waste of money. While ministers never interfered to check expenses, of which they could not pretend ignorance, the Prince had recourse to means for relieving himself from his embarrassments, which ultimately tended to increase them. It was attempted to raise a loan for him in foreign countries; a measure which he thought unconstitutional, and put a stop to; and, after a consultation with Lord Loughborough, all the bonds were burnt, although with a considerable loss to the Prince. After that, another plan of retrenchment was proposed, upon which he had frequent consultations with Lord Thurlow, whose fair, open, and manly advice was, that, after the promise he had made, the Prince must not think of applying to Parliament; that he must avoid being of any party in politics; but, above all, exposing himself to the suspicion of being influenced in political opinion by his embarrassments; that the only course he could pursue with honour was to retire from public life for a time, and appropriate the greater part of his income to the liquidation of his debts. This was agreed upon in the autumn of 1792. Why, it might be asked, was it not carried into effect? About that period, his Royal Highness began to receive unsolicited advice from another quarter. He was told by Lord Loughborough, both in words and in writing, that the plan savoured too much of the advice given to M. Égalité. By the plan now proposed, the Prince had not the grace of suggesting either the retrenchments or the checks upon his future proceedings. His past misconduct was exhibited in

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the harshest point of view ; he was set in a gilded pilory ; sent to do public penance in an embroidered sheet. He was left in possession of too much income to exempt him from envy, and too little to shield him from scorn. To pay the debts, something ought to be given by the King. The first and most natural feeling of a parent would be to make some sacrifice to retrieve the imprudence of a son. He should therefore expect £10,000 a-year from his Majesty's privy purse and £5000 from the Queen's establishment ; for the remaining £10,000 a-year, he would look to those plaes and sinecures which neither added dignity nor afforded support to the crown.

24th to 26th.
House of
Lords.Duke of
Clarence.

In the Lords, the bill did not pass without several debates ; but after the ample discussions which had taken place in the other house, little novelty in statement or in argument could arise. On the motion for a second reading, Lord Cholmondeley delivered, on the part of the Prince, an expression of his sentiments similar to that made by Mr. Anstruther, which afforded an opportunity for the Duke of Clarence to offer some interesting observations and statements. His Royal Highness professed his intention to vote for the bill, but complained of the manner in which his royal relative was treated. It might have been supposed, he said, that the Prince had now come to an age at which he was fully capable of acting for himself, and would, of his own accord, have been disposed to take measures to free himself from any incumbrance which he might have contracted ; but the authors of the bill had taken the popularity of such a measure out of his hands. It was a notorious fact, that, when the marriage was agreed on, there was a stipulation that he should be exonerated from his debts. What could he understand by this, but their immediate discharge ; not that they should be left unliquidated for nine years. The authors of the bill had stated that the credit and stability of the throne depended on the support of the independence and dignity of every branch of the Royal Family, particularly of the Prince of Wales. Was the method they had taken the best calculated to support

that dignity and independence? The present was, in one point of view, like every one which related to any part of the Royal Family, a public bill; but it was more strictly a private one, as nothing could be done without the consent of the Prince. Advantage, then, had been taken of his difficulties to procure from him this consent. Persons in another place, who possessed great powers of eloquence, and abundant choice of animated expressions, had exerted their powers in support of the measure of granting a subsidy of £200,000 a year to the King of Sardinia, a sum of £1,200,000 to the King of Prussia, and lately a loan of £4,600,000 to the Emperor; but, although on these occasions they displayed all their stores of language,—when they brought forward the situation of his Royal Brother, they prefaced what they had to propose with the expressions—“an unpleasant task—an arduous undertaking—the distresses of the people in consequence of the war—the regret of laying additional burthens on the public;” yet if they had adopted, with respect to his Royal Brother, a language somewhat more favourable, they would not have had a vote less on the present bill. His Royal Highness complained also, and not without justice, of the obloquy cast on the Prince in scurrilous pamphlets; and spoke with proper feeling on the situation of the Princess of Wales, a lovely and amiable woman, torn from her family, and removed from all her early connexions. What must be her feelings when such circumstances attended her reception in a country where she had a right to expect every thing befitting her high rank, and the exalted station to which she was called? As a friend to the Prince, he, however, would not oppose the passing of the bill; for he was convinced that the sooner it was passed, the sooner would its absurdity and malignity appear. Many peers expressed their opinions; but the bill passed without either division or protest.

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1796.

Bill passed.

On presenting it for the royal assent, the Speaker expressed himself in terms most honourable and judicious. He mentioned the dignity of the House,

27th.
Presented to
the King.

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1795.

End of the
session.

and displayed their liberality, without using a phrase or making an allusion from which could be inferred the slightest contumely to the Sovereign or any portion of the Royal Family.

His Majesty acknowledged, with peculiar sensibility, this mark of attention; and, in closing the session, spoke of the present circumstances of France as affording a hope, that, in their effects, they might hasten the return of a state of order and regular government, capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of amity and peace with other powers.

CHAPTER THE NINETIETH.

1787 to 1792.

Trial of Mr. Hastings.—Formal proceedings.—Preparations in Westminster Hall.—Mr. Fox complains of a libel published by Stockdale—a prosecution ordered.—Mr. Burke's general opening.—Proposal of Mr. Fox to try each article of the impeachment separately—objected to—debated in the House of Lords—rejected.—Mr. Fox opens the Benares charge.—Mr. Grey.—Evidence—summed up by Mr. Anstruther.—Begun charge opened by Mr. Adam.—Interruption by Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Pelham.—A paper published by Mr. Hastings referred to.—Evidence of Major Scott on the subject.—Witnesses examined.—Mr. Middleton.—Sir Elijah Impey.—Charge summed up by Mr. Sheridan.—Debates in the House of Commons—on expense.—Mr. Burke's observations on Mr. Sheridan's speech.—Mr. Sheridan's eulogy on Mr. Burke.—Observations on the proceedings.—1789. The King's illness occasions an interruption.—Mr. Burke opens the charge on presents—his observations on certificates of character.—Mr. Hastings' petition to the House of Commons—debated.—Mr. Burke censured.—Continues his opening.—Evidence and objections.—Charge closed.—Adjournment intimated.—Address of Mr. Hastings.—Adjournment.—Prosecution ordered against the *World*, a newspaper.—1790. Mr. Anstruther opens part of the sixth charge.—Evidence.—Dissatisfaction of the managers.—Mr. Fox sums up the charge. Observations on the close of the third session.—Managers permitted to select charges on which they will proceed.—General Burgoyne's motion against Major Scott—his defence.—Mr. Burke.—Major Scott reprimanded in his place.

State of public feeling.—Supposition that the impeachment abated by the dissolution of Parliament.—Mr. Burke recommends its continuance.—Committee moved.—Observations of Mr. Bastard—Colonel Macleod.—The House in a Committee.—Mr. Burke's motion.—Mr. Erskine proposes a committee to search for precedents.—Mr. Addington.—Mr. Erskine's argument.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Erskine's reply.—Mr. Burke—his motives.—1791. Some charges abandoned.—Mr. Burke on the duration of the trial.—Attempts to terminate it.—Message to the Lords.—They appoint a committee.—Debate on their report.—The Lord Chancellor.—Trial resumed.—Mr. St. John opens the fourth charge.—Address of Mr. Hastings.—Lord Kenyon. Mr. Burke.—Mr. Law.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Fox.—Evidence. Sir James Erskine St. Clair sums up.—Lord Stormont.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Loveden's motion in the House of Commons.—Mr. Dundas.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Fox.—Lord King's motion.—Speech of Mr. Hastings—interrupted by Mr. Fox—resumed.—Adjournment.—Observations.

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XC.

1787.
Trial of Mr.
Hastings.

Course to be
pursued.

In the late session of Parliament, came to its final close the unprecedented, and long may it continue unparalleled, trial of Warren Hastings. In a former page, an account was given of the charges against him, and his being held to bail*. To recapitulate, or even analyse, the speeches of the managers and the advocates, or the facts stated by the witnesses, however closely the matter might be compressed, would form a work in several volumes†. It is therefore intended only to select the most remarkable portions of the proceedings, to exhibit some striking passages in the

* Chapter lvii.

† The reader will judge of the impossibility of giving full details, when it is stated that the minutes of the short-hand writer occupy thirty folio written volumes, besides eleven printed folio volumes of evidence; and reports, arguments and opinions of the judges upon points of law. A history of this trial, carefully compressed, and published by Debrett in 1796, fills a volume of seven hundred and seventy pages, printed on a small type, in columns, equal at least to three volumes of the work now before the reader, exclusive of the articles of impeachment, the plea, and the replication.

speeches, and to notice the debates and motions as they occurred.

A copy of the defendant's answer, put in at their bar, was forwarded by the Lords to the House of Commons; and Mr. Burke, in the name of a committee of twenty members, presented a replication. The commencement, the order, and course of the trial were fixed according to precedent, and solicitors and counsel were retained to prepare and arrange documents, and assist the managers*.

The body of Westminster Hall was filled with a large wooden building, which rendered access to the ordinary courts difficult and unpleasant. A throne represented the presence of the King, and the court was so arranged as to correspond exactly with the House of Peers, with places allotted to members of the other House, and to peeresses, ladies, and auditors, who were admitted by tickets. A procession was formed, and the Lords took their seats, having solemnly and respectfully bowed as they passed before the throne. Proclamations were made, and the defendant, having been brought in by his bail, and knelt before the grand tribunal, was arraigned by the Lord Chancellor. The reading of the charges, the answer, and the replication, occupied two days.

As a restraint on the intemperance of the press, Mr. Fox complained to the House of Commons of a pamphlet, published by Stockdale, intitled "A Review of the principal charges against Warren Hastings," as a gross and scandalous libel on the managers, on the House itself, on his Majesty, and on the whole legislature; and, although the House ought not to trust their honour out of their own hands, he proposed an address to the King, to order a prosecution by the Attorney-General. After some debate on the words of his motion, some of which were expunged on a division†, the prosecution was voted. As the passages selected

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XC.

1787.

Dec. 8.
Formal proceedings.

12th.

Preparations
in Westminster Hall.

1788.

Feb. 13.

13 and 14.

14th.

Mr. Fox complains to the House of Commons of a libel.

16th.

Prosecution ordered.

* The solicitors were Messrs. Wallis and Troward; the counsel, Dr. Scott and Dr. Laurence, with Mr. Mansfield, Mr. Piggott, Mr. Richard Burke (brother of the manager), and Mr. Douglas. For the defendant, appeared Mr. Law, Mr. Plumer, and Mr. Dallas.

† The number for retaining the disputed passage was 66; against it, 132.

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XC.

1788.

Mr. Burke's
general open-
ing.
16th.

were very trivial and unimportant, the popularity of the impeachment was not enhanced by this proceeding.

In a speech of extraordinary force and eloquence, which engaged the attention of the House during four days, Mr. Burke made a general opening of the case, premising that each of the several articles would be stated with more particularity by other managers. He trusted that what the greatest inquest of the nation had begun, its highest tribunal would accomplish. The magnitude of the interest which the managers had in charge, impressed them with awe and anxiety. "The business of this day," he said, "is not the business of this man; it is not solely whether the prisoner at the bar be found innocent or guilty, but whether millions of mankind shall be made miserable or happy. The constitution itself is deeply involved. The crimes charged are not lapses, defects, errors of common human frailty, which, as we know and feel, we can allow for. We charge this offender with no crimes that have not arisen from passions which it is criminal to harbour—with no offences that have not their root in avarice, rapacity, pride, insolence, ferocity, treachery, cruelty, malignity of temper,—in short, in nothing that does not argue a total extinction of all moral principle, that does not manifest an inveterate blackness of heart, dyed in grain with malice, vitiated, corrupted, gangrened to the very core. We have chosen the criminal on the same principle on which we selected the crimes. We do not bring before you a poor, puny, trembling delinquent, misled, perhaps, by those who ought to have taught him better, but who have afterward oppressed him by their power, as they had first corrupted him by their example. We have brought before you the chief of the tribe, the head of the whole body of eastern offenders; a captain-general of iniquity, under whom all the fraud, all the peculation, all the tyranny, in India, are embodied, disciplined, arrayed, and paid."

Mr. Burke then treated on the nature of the evi-

dence which would be produced, chiefly documentary, signed or written by the prisoner himself. There would also be living witnesses; and when their lordships considered his late enormous power, his criminal, indefatigable assiduity in the destruction of all recorded evidence, the influence he had over almost all living testimony, and the distance of the scene of action,—they and the world would be astonished that so much, so clear, so solid, and so conclusive evidence of all kinds had been obtained. In most instances, the evidence was such as would satisfy the narrow precision which must prevail in a subordinate and delegated jurisdiction; but the managers asserted, and claimed, as the right of the subjects of Great Britain, that they were not bound by any rules of evidence, or any other rules whatever, except those of natural, immutable, and substantial justice.

He then described the powers given to the East India Company by the charter, and by the concession of native sovereigns. “The principle pervading the whole service, at home and abroad,” he said, “was monopoly; and this had enabled Mr. Hastings to put himself at the head of a regular system of corruption: inferior agents would not criminate each other; and he had never endeavoured to detect the practice.” He depicted also, in strong colours, the characters of Cantoo Baboo and Gunga Govind Sing, to whom unlimited power had been corruptly confided. 16th.

Mr. Burke then set forth the history of the country, dividing it into six periods, beginning with the darkness of the remotest antiquity, to 1756, which he termed the era of British power. Through all those great revolutions, the Hindoo polity and spirit of government did more or less exist in Bengal, until it was finally destroyed by Mr. Hastings.

From some passages in the recorded defence, he inferred that Mr. Hastings claimed arbitrary power; but of such a power he denied the existence, and supported his opinion by a long extract from Tavernier. Another topic of defence was the continued confidence of Parliament and the Company; but these, he averred,

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1788.

were granted before the extent and enormity of his crimes were known. Mr. Hastings relied also on thanks received from the Company, and from the native princes of India. "But do we not know," Mr. Burke said, "how seals are obtained in that country? Do we not know the subjection and thralldom in which the natives are held, and that they are obliged to return thanks for the very sufferings they have felt? I understand he has obtained the thanks of the miserable princesses of Oude, whom he has cruelly imprisoned, whose treasure he has seized, and whose eunuchs he has tortured. They thank him for going away: they thank him for leaving them the smallest trifle of their subsistence: and I venture to say, if he wanted a hundred more panegyrics, on the condition that he would never return, he might have them."

18th.

The principles upon which Mr. Hastings governed his conduct and his defence, might all be comprised in one short word—arbitrary power. An arbitrary must always be a corrupt system: he who thinks he has no law but his own will, finds that he has no end but his own profit.

"In the course of all his proceedings," Mr. Burke said, "your lordships will not fail to observe, he is never corrupt, but he is cruel; he never dines with comfort, but where he is sure to create a famine. He never robs from the loose superfluity of standing greatness; he devours the fallen, the indigent, the necessitous. His extortion is not like the generous rapacity of the princely eagle, who snatches away the living, struggling prey: he is a vulture, who feeds upon the prostrate, the dying, and the dead. As his cruelty is more shocking than his corruption, so his hypocrisy has something more frightful than his cruelty; for whilst his bloody and rapacious hand signs proscriptions, and sweeps away the food of the widow and orphan, his eyes overflow with tears, and he converts the healing balm that bleeds from wounded humanity into a rancorous poison, deadly to the race of man."

Mr. Hastings declared that the sums he obtained were not for his own use, but that of the Company. His was patriotic bribery and public-spirited corruption. "He is a peculator for the good of his country; a robber in gross and a thief in detail; he steals, he filches, he plunders, he oppresses, he extorts—all for the good of the dear East India Company—all for the advantage of his honoured masters, the proprietors—all in gratitude to the dear perfidious Court of Directors, who had, as he said in one of his dispatches, heaped insults on his person, slanders on his character, and indignities on his station; who never had the confidence in him that they had in the meanest of his predecessors."

Mr. Burke then adverted to the confidence reposed in two men every way so unworthy as Gonga Govind Sing and Debi Sing, and the corruptions and malpractices of every kind which ensued. He treated the influence of Debi Sing as derived from his farming a tax upon prostitutes, and depicted with minute particularity the seductive revels by which he corrupted the young Europeans who formed the provincial councils; and when they had become sensible of his misconduct, of gaining the influence and support of Mr. Hastings himself. On this system and under this management, grievous and cruel oppressions and tortures were practised on the landholders and zemindars of Dinjapore, most of whom were women; they fled from the ancient seats of their ancestors, after seeing all the lands which had been assigned to charitable and religious uses cruelly sequestered and sold. Even the lands and funds set aside for their funeral ceremonies; even the very feeble consolations of death, were, by the rigid hand of a tyranny, more consuming than the funeral pile, more greedy than the grave, and more inexorable than death itself, seized and taken to make good the honour of corruption and the faith of bribery pledged to Mr. Hastings or his instruments.

Mr. Burke then proceeded to display the cruelties and tortures exercised by Debi Sing and his instruments on the persons of men, women, and children, to

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obtain a discovery of treasures which were suspected to be concealed. These descriptions were so highly wrought, so replete with horror, so agonizing in their details, and in some particulars so abhorrent to decent feeling*, that a general exclamation of all present, the sobs, the suppressed screams, the agitation even to fainting of the ladies, attested their harrowing effect. The women thus treated, Mr. Burke said, lost their caste; and, in another mode, some degradation was inflicted on the Brahmins.

19th.

Mr. Burke concluded with a magnificent peroration, in which, after recapitulating in a condensed form the heads of accusation, he said, "In the name of the Commons of all England, I charge all this villany upon Warren Hastings.

"My Lords, what is it that we want here to a great act of national justice? Do we want a cause? You have the cause of oppressed princes, of undone women of the first rank, of desolated provinces, and of wasted kingdoms.

"Do you want a criminal? When was there so much iniquity ever laid to the charge of any one? No, my Lords, you must not look to punish any other such delinquent from India—Warren Hastings has not left substance enough in India to nourish such another delinquent.

"Is it a prosecutor you want? You have before you the Commons of Great Britain as prosecutors; and, I believe, my Lords, that the sun in his beneficent progress round the world does not behold a more glorious sight than that of men, separated from a remote people by the material bounds and barriers of nature, united by the bond of a social and moral community; all the Commons of England resenting as their own, the indignities and cruelties that are offered to all the people of India.

"Do we want a tribunal? My Lords, no example of antiquity, nothing in the modern world, nothing in the range of human imagination, can supply us with

* From the information of several who were present; and see History of the Trial, part i. p. 7.

" a tribunal like this. The throne, the heir apparent,
 " the other branches of the royal family, the hereditary
 " peerage, the bishops, those lights of our religion ;
 " these are the securities afforded by all the constituent
 " parts of the body of the house. Therefore, with
 " confidence, ordered by the House of Commons, I
 " impeach Warren Hastings, Esquire, of high crimes
 " and misdemeanors. I impeach him, in the name of
 " the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assem-
 " bled, whose parliamentary trust he has betrayed : I
 " impeach him in the name of all the Commons of
 " Great Britain, whose national character he has dis-
 " honoured : I impeach him in the name of the people
 " of India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has sub-
 " verted ; whose property he has destroyed, whose
 " country he has laid waste and desolate : I impeach
 " him in the name of human nature itself, which he
 " has cruelly outraged, injured, and oppressed, in both
 " sexes, in every age, rank, situation, and condition of
 " life."

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When Mr. Burke had concluded, Mr. Fox proposed that the managers should proceed in the impeachment article by article, and that Mr. Hastings should make a separate defence, and the managers reply to each defence. The defendant's counsel dissenting from this arrangement, Mr. Fox assigned as a reason for electing that course, the desire to avoid obscurity, by enabling the court to pronounce a judgment on each head.

19th.
 Proposal of
 Mr. Fox to try
 each article of
 the impeach-
 ment sepa-
 rately.
 Objected to

Mr. Law, who now for the first time had an opportunity of shewing himself in his client's cause, ably repelled this argument, referring to the case of Archbishop Laud. Nor did he omit to notice, in terms which drew on him the angry animadversion of Mr. Fox, the harsh and cruel manner in which Mr. Burke had opened the case ; similar, he said, to the course pursued in the prosecution of Sir Walter Raleigh.

In discussing this question in the House, the Lord Chancellor observed that Mr. Burke had mentioned circumstances of such accumulated horror and deep criminality, that every thing specifically alleged in the articles before them sunk into utter insignificance ; and

21st.
 Debated in the
 House of
 Lords.

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The proposal
rejected.22nd.
Mr. Fox opens
the Benares
charge.

as the right honourable manager had declared that he had not assumed the privilege of an advocate to exaggerate, he should be held to strict proof of all he had asserted. The crimes were of so deep a dye, that if a defendant were upon conviction to forfeit all his property and suffer the most exemplary sentence that could be inflicted, it would be far, very far, short of an adequate punishment. But, as he was ready in the most ample manner to punish Mr. Hastings if really guilty, he was equally bound in conscience to protect him if innocent; and he never could consent to a mode of procedure unfair to the defendant, and contrary to the fundamental principles of justice. He therefore moved, "That the Commons should produce all the evidence in support of their impeachment before the defendant should be called upon for his defence." Lord Loughborough moved to agree in the course suggested by the managers; but, on a division, his motion was rejected by a great majority*, and a protest in seven articles, signed in the whole by nine and in part by four peers, was placed on the Journals.

When the decision was announced, the managers withdrew for a short space; and, on their return, Mr. Fox opened the first, or, as it is generally called, the Benares charge, relating to the transactions with Cheyt Sing. In contradiction to an assertion in Mr. Hastings's defence, he averred that the Rajah was, in his own right and in a large and exalted sense of the word, a great Chief or Zemindar; described his relations with the East India Company, and the arrangement made on the cession of the province of Benares; narrated, as he proposed to give them in evidence, the demands on Cheyt Sing and the subsequent proceedings, denominating Mr. Hastings a miserable sophist, as well as an intolerable tyrant.

After some observations on a parallel supposed to have been drawn between the prisoner and Alexander the Great, "I have heard," Mr. Fox proceeded, "that an idea has gone forth of a want of certainty and precision in some of these articles. In the one now

* 88 to 33.

"discussed there can be no ambiguity. It contains
"no more than two distinct crimes: the exaction of
"five lacks of rupees by Mr. Hastings and his pro-
"ceeding up to Benares to extort five hundred thou-
"sand pounds, and, secondly, the imprisonment of
"Cheyt Sing."

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On this speech, it may be observed, that while it contains all the fire of an orator, it is perfect in method and arrangement; and while it discloses, in strong and severe language, the opinions of the speaker on the conduct of the party accused, it has few of those harsh personalities which so strongly marked the general opening. But Mr. Fox did not omit paying a high tribute to the diligence, zeal, and enthusiasm employed by Mr. Burke in making the affairs of India generally understood, and bringing guilt before the public whether they would see it or not.

At the next sitting, Mr. Grey enforced and amplified some of the matters advanced by Mr. Fox, and evidence, both documentary and oral, was produced and investigated. During the circuits of the judges, a recess of more than a month's duration took place: the examination of witnesses was then resumed; and the evidence having been summed up by Mr. Anstruther, the proceeding on this charge was closed with a few observations from Mr. Burke.

25th
Mr. Grey
26th, 28th,
29th.
Evidence.

April 10th,
11th.
Summed up
by Mr. Anstru-
ther.

Mr. Adam opened the next, commonly called "the Begum charge," because it related to injuries alleged to have been inflicted by Mr. Hastings on those princesses. The learned manager described the extent of their dominions, their exalted station, the amount of their treasures, the pecuniary situation of the Rajah, and the means by which Mr. Hastings had seized the property of these ladies, attempting to fix an imputation of guilt upon them, by falsifying dates in his narrative.

15th.
Begum
charge
opened by
Mr. Adam.

Irritated at such an assertion, Mr. Hastings transgressed the bounds which a person in his situation ought to have observed, by exclaiming that the assertion was false; Mr. Adam took his full revenge by contrasting himself, the delegated manager of the

Interruption
by Mr.
Hastings.

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16th.
Mr. Pelham.

Commons, with the degraded man at the bar, loaded with crimes, and groaning under his enormities.

Mr. Pelham dwelt on this charge as the basis of the whole impeachment. The friends of Mr. Hastings had stated his wealth at so small an amount, that they cast doubts on their own narrative. "But," he said, "in the course of this inquiry it will be proved incontrovertibly that he was not only the greatest oppressor, the greatest tyrant that ever appeared on the eastern coast, but also the greatest peculator; that he was the most corrupt as well as the most cruel. The facts to be proved would also completely refute the assertions made in his written defence, and in a paper said to have been distributed by his orders among the members of the House of Commons."

17th.

A paper published by Mr. Hastings referred to. Major Scott's evidence on the subject.

Mr. Sheridan produced the paper; and Major Scott, being called to prove the writing, printing, and delivery, declared that Mr. Hastings took no share in the composition, although he assented to it when read; that only fifty copies were printed, and not above six distributed; the residue was still in his possession. The defence was composed by a few friends of the defendant, applying themselves severally to each of the charges; the answer to that under discussion was entirely by Mr. Halhed; the general introduction and the answer concerning the Rohilla war were by the accused himself.

April 22 to
May 30.
Witnesses
examined.
Mr.
Middleton.

For a period exceeding six weeks, the recess at Whitsuntide excepted, witnesses were examined and documents read in support of the prosecution. Mr. Middleton was one, and as he denied all recollection of some circumstances which he was thought to have known, and which could not, from their nature have been forgotten, much pleasantry, not unmixed with severity, both in court and through the press, was poured forth on the subject of his memory. It was intimated that he had attended consultations with the friends and legal advisers of the defendant; but it appeared that he had only been two or three times at the residence of the solicitor when counsel were there; he

had never been in consultation, gone by appointment, or advised on any point relating to the trial, but had frequently attended meetings of the managers on their summons; they had pressed him with questions, using expressions which amounted to threats, and he had often been directed to leave the room, while Mr. Francis remained in consultation.

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Sir Elijah Impey was also examined several times, and on one occasion stated, that his answers were untruly represented and unjustly commented on elsewhere. An altercation ensued between him, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Fox, which was terminated by the interference of the Lord Chancellor.

Sir Elijah
Impey.

May 21.

In summing up the evidence on this charge, Mr. Sheridan made that celebrated oration which widely extended his fame. Public expectation, excited to the highest pitch, was more than gratified; but it seems extraordinary that, although the means were easy*, this celebrated harangue was never given to the public. To analyze the whole, or to select parts, would be a vain and useless labour; but its general characteristics may be taken from observations of Mr. Burke, which will soon be noticed.

June 3,
6, 10, 13.
Charge
summed up
by Mr.
Sheridan.

This was the last proceeding, in this session, before the Lords. In the House of Commons, some debates, not free from heat and acrimony, took place on the expense attending the proceeding. Some imputation was cast on the Lords of the Treasury. To an explanation offered by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke shortly answered that his assertion was not true.

Debates in the
House of
Commons.

May 9.
On expence.

As such an expression was unusual in the House of Commons, as in every other society composed of gentlemen, Mr. Pitt observed that, perhaps, from being accustomed to use an extraordinary licence of speech elsewhere, Mr. Burke shewed himself so much the

* A copy, taken by the short-hand writer, is now before me, and, of course, might have been published, with Mr. Sheridan's corrections, at any time. Mr. Moore, in his Life of Sheridan. vol. i. c. 2, says that a similar copy is in his possession, and gives from it extracts, with copious observations and satisfactory reasons why it should not be published. Stronger reasons than that now adduced, the inaccuracy of short-hand writers' notes (for they might have been amended by the author himself), must, at the same time, have prevailed, or it would not have been withheld from public view.

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slave of habit, that he forgot the place where he was, and seemed desirous of introducing that practice within these walls. Mr. Burke replied, that Mr. Pitt must allude to what was supposed to have passed in a place where he seldom, if ever, made his appearance. It was the curse of his situation to be surrounded with whisperers and tale-bearers, and to take as facts the narratives of such reporters.

May 20th.

The accounts, when delivered, were found to contain only four or five general heads; and a motion by Mr. Burges requiring a more particular detail was carried, after a strenuous opposition from the leading managers*. When these accounts had lain several days on the table, Mr. Burges, urged to it by Mr. Fox, gave notice of a motion for a monthly account of expenses; but the speech of Mr. Sheridan was used as a powerful engine against him.

30th

June 6.
Mr. Burke's
Observations
on Mr.
Sheridan's
speech.

Mr. Burke offered him his warmest congratulations on his having chosen that glorious day, after the triumph of the morning, to fill up the happy interval between their adjournment from Westminster Hall and their rising, by calling them to examine the items of a solicitor's bill. This proceeding alone was fit to follow his first onset within those walls, when he had stood up, and boldly ventured for a long time, singly and unseconded, to call for the attention of the House, after every other member had been struck dumb with astonishment and admiration at the wonderful eloquence of his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan), who had that day again surprised the thousands who hung with rapture on his accents, by a display of talents unparalleled in the annals of oratory, and which did the highest honour to himself, to that house, and to his country. For his part, Mr. Burke added, his mind was not sufficiently let down from the height of exaltation to which it had been raised; it required a degree of bending, of wetting, and of relaxation, to sink his thoughts to the level of the proposed inquiry. After the sublime and glorious feast of the morning, this

* 60 to 17. The managers withdrew, and did not vote.

curious speculation on minute particulars indicated to him the intention of Providence that man should not be proud, but that ecstasy of the mind should be checked and cooled by some sudden mortification and disgrace; some proof of natural infirmity must be thrust before his sight. Of all species of oratory; of every kind of eloquence that had been heard, either in ancient or in modern times; whatever the acuteness of the bar, the dignity of the senate, or the morality of the pulpit could furnish, none had equalled that day's display in Westminster Hall. No holy religionist, no man of any description as a literary character, could have rivalled the pure sentiments of morality, or the variety of knowledge, force of imagination, propriety and vivacity of allusion, beauty and elegance of diction, and strength of expression, to which they had all listened. From poetry up to eloquence, there was not a species of composition of which a complete and perfect specimen might not have been culled from the speech to which he alluded, and which, he was persuaded, had made too strong an impression to be soon obliterated, and to render such a coarse dish as had been set before them at all palatable. There was, Mr. Burke added, no conquest of man over man, like that of genius over injustice: instead, therefore, of resolving themselves into a committee of petty accounts, they ought, like the Romans, after Scipio's victories, to go and thank the gods for that day's triumph. If any man doubted the solicitors' charges, let him call the solicitors to the bar, and examine them. For his part, he would continue to order such services as he thought proper, till the House should command him to desist. After a long debate, the inquiry was superseded by the order of the day.

This compliment of Mr. Burke was not purely gratuitous. Mr. Sheridan had that day spoken of him, as a gentleman whose abilities on this, as on some former occasions, happily for the glory of the age, were not intrusted merely to the perishable eloquence of the day, but would live to be admired when all who witnessed them were mute, and most of them forgotten.

Mr. Sheridan's
eulogy on Mr.
Burke.

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Observations
on the pro-
ceedings.

Some questioned, even at the time, the sincerity of these highly strained compliments on either side, but without any sufficient reason. The subsequent estrangement, or more properly animosity, of these eminent individuals must ever furnish reason to lament the infirmities and inconsistencies of human nature. It appeared, however, something like a prophetic irony, that much of Mr. Sheridan's applause turned on Mr. Burke's able vindication of the Rights of Man.

A whole session of Parliament, in which thirty-five laborious days had been devoted to this trial, had now elapsed, and the case for the prosecution on two charges only had been closed. Already had the public begun to feel and to express a weariness and disgust, which all the lofty professions of the managers and all the exertions of their friends could not avert, or even mitigate. No one denied the powerful ability which was displayed; but, although no defence had yet been heard from counsel, it was generally perceived that the pompous statements which had been advanced were not as yet supported by any semblance of adequate proof; and with a profound feeling of dissatisfaction did the thinking part of mankind hear those rules and institutes, by which persons accused are protected against hasty assumption or malicious perversion, decried as the mere practice of inferior courts, totally inadequate to the regulation of a parliamentary prosecution. On this head, the managers often expressed themselves in a tone, and conducted themselves in a manner, calculated to make every man tremble for public liberty and individual safety, if attacked by persons raised to a great eminence by talents or by circumstances, or wielding the delegated authority of any powerful body.

But, above all things, thinking men were struck with the unmitigated fury with which personal abuse was lavished on Mr. Hastings. His age, in the mere computation of time, could not be termed venerable; for he had only completed fifty-five years; but the toils and cares of a life, of which so great a portion had been employed on matters of the mightiest concern, in

an unhealthy climate, had given him an appearance of much more advanced senility. It was calculated to protect him, at least, against unqualified personal invective; but the violence in which Mr. Burke delighted to revel, furnished precedent and supply for others, who could rival his asperity, if they could not emulate his genius. The public, ever feeling and compassionate on such occasions, sympathized with the individual thus attacked, and bestowed little of their approbation on those who lavished on the supposed offender those terms of obloquy which ought to have been confined to the description of his offence. Curiosity, which at first had a powerful sway in drawing together all who, by right or under favour, could gain entrance, already operated so languidly, that, except on very great occasions, such as the speech of Mr. Fox or Mr. Sheridan, the benches allotted to the Peers, the Commons, and even the audience, exhibited a dismal chasm.

In the ensuing session, owing to the King's illness and the consequent discussions, nearly five months elapsed from the meeting of Parliament, before the House of Peers could proceed on the trial.

Mr. Burke then commenced an opening of a portion of the sixth charge, which he said related to presents, or, in plain English, bribes. In this opening he did not deviate from the course he had before pursued. "We now come," he said, "to the charge which imputes bribery and corruption to Mr. Hastings; but we feel some little difficulty in limine; we here appear in the name and character of representatives of the Commons of Great Britain, the representatives of the inhabitants of Bengal; and yet there have lately come to our hands such ample certificates, such full testimonials, from every person whose cause we espouse, that we shall appear to be in the strange situation of persons disavowed by those in whose name and character they complain. We find before us a flood-tide of panegyric. No encomiums, however exalted, no language, however beautiful, can paint the perfect satisfaction, the en-

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The King's
illness.

April 21, 25, 30.
Mr. Burke
opens the
charge on pre-
sents.

His observa-
tions on certi-
ficates of cha-
racter.

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"tire acquiescence, the wonderful admiration, expressed by all the natives of Bengal, of the character of the person whom, on their part, we have brought as a criminal to your bar. Consequently, with the candour which has actuated the managers in calling as witnesses the bosom friends and confidants of Mr. Hastings, we shall not suppress this universal voice of Bengal in his favour; we shall produce it as a part of our evidence. Oh, my lords," he proceeded, "consider the situation of a people, when we prove to you the things that we shall prove, who are forced to mix their praises with their groans—who are compelled to sign with hands which have been in torture, which are yet warm with the thumb-screws upon them—to sign an attestation in favour of the person from whom all their sufferings have been derived*. You will see before you what is so well expressed by one of our poets as the homage paid to tyrants:

" ' Mouth honour ; breath
" ' Which the poor heart would fain deny,
" ' But dares not.'

"Every one knows that it is, in the course of criminal trials, the last thing produced; when the evidence of alibi; when all the arts of the Old Bailey are exhausted; at last they call to character. After the evidence of a murder, a forgery, or robbery, every witness says the culprit has an admirable character. ' I have known him from a boy; he is wonderfully good; he is the best of men; I would trust him with untold gold;' and immediately follows: Guilty, death†. I do not say that Mr. Hastings is the first

* The attestations here alluded to were not procured by influence or by compulsion; they were obtained through the personal industry of George Nesbitt Thompson, Esq a barrister in Calcutta, who owed neither advancement nor protection to Mr. Hastings, but, being engaged as one of his attorneys, obtained and transmitted, under the express sanction of the Governor General, Earl Cornwallis, in council, the testimonials of the natives.

† This argument does no more honour to the correctness than it does to the good taste of Mr. Burke. Witnesses to character, in a criminal prosecution, are persons who know nothing of the facts, but who come to make the court and jury believe that it is highly improbable that the prisoner in whose favour they offer their testimony would be guilty of the crime alleged against him. If, however, the facts are satisfactorily proved and the case is not tainted with doubt,

“ to take this course: undoubtedly he is justified by
 “ the first court of antiquity; for Caius Verres, Anto-
 “ nius, and every other man famous for the pillage
 “ and destruction of provinces, never failed to bring
 “ before their accusers the attestations of the injured
 “ to their character.

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“ Mr. Hastings was not only personally corrupt,
 “ but he had corrupted all the other servants. His
 “ bribery would be divided into two classes; passive
 “ and active corruption. The first was to be evinced
 “ by shewing that much was taken with his own
 “ hand; but a far greater portion by the instrumen-
 “ tality of his black agents, Banyans and other de-
 “ pendants confidentially connected with him. His
 “ active corruption had been exercised in giving, under
 “ colour of contracts, a number of lucrative advan-
 “ tages, by unauthorized and unreasonable grants,
 “ pensions, and allowances, through which he cor-
 “ rupted actively the whole service of the Company.
 “ And, lastly, by establishing an universal connivance,
 “ he had bound all parties, in a league of iniquity, to
 “ support each other against inquiry.”

On each of these heads, Mr. Burke was stating, during three days, the facts and the intended evidence, when a message was received from the House of Commons, to which Major Scott had presented a petition from Mr. Hastings, stating that in the last year the managers had introduced allegations unconnected with the charges, and designating him as an accomplice in a plot for assassinating the Shah Zaddah; in procuring

Appeal to the
 House of
 Commons.
 April 30.

the jury do their duty in pronouncing the verdict “ Guilty.” But if, instead of such general and argumentative evidence, in the cases supposed, of robbery, forgery, and murder, witnesses were to say, “ the goods the prisoner is charged
 “ with stealing are still in my possession,” “ the instrument he is accused of forg-
 “ ing was signed or executed by me,” or “ the man he is stated to have killed
 “ is alive at this moment, or died a twelvemonth before the alleged crime,” an
 acquittal must instantly follow. Now, by the present impeachment, Mr. Has-
 tings was charged with plunder, oppression, and cruelty toward the inhabitants
 of India; and those very persons come forward to say, in all the exaggerated
 eloquence of their highly figurative idiom, “ We never have been plundered; we
 “ never have been oppressed; we have experienced no cruelty from Mr. Has-
 “ tings: on the contrary, we only wish that all our future governors may resem-
 “ ble him.” This is the fallacy of Mr. Burke’s parallel. It is unnecessary to
 add a word on the coarseness of the comparison between such a man as the
 defendant, and a common malefactor at the Old Bailey.

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the death of Miran; and as the author and instigator of various acts of oppression and savage cruelty alleged to have been committed by a man named Deby Sing. That, in the present session, Mr. Burke, in express terms, accused him of murdering Nundcomar, by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey. Declaring such accusations to be untrue and unfounded, he prayed that such of them as properly fell within its immediate cognizance might be brought forward and prosecuted in specific articles; and that, in respect of the rest, such other mode of prosecution might be directed, or means adopted, as might enable him to make the refutation equally public with the charges.

Debated.

The managers and their friends at first resisted the introduction of the petition, and Mr. Burke termed Major Scott the agent of Mr. Hastings, the known libeller of the House, who ought long since to have been expelled. A general call to order shewed the sense entertained of the impropriety of such language; and the Major, with natural, if not justifiable, indignation, declared that no man should dare to throw on him such illiberal reflections. This heat was allayed by the interposition of the Speaker, who pronounced the language of Mr. Burke extremely disorderly; and hoped he would not, by again violating the order and regularity of the House, oblige him to perform the unpleasant duty of interrupting him.

April 30.

In subsequent debates, the same temper was shewn. The Lords were requested, by a message, to adjourn the trial. On the following day, Mr. Frederick Montagu produced a long letter written to him by Mr. Burke; and uttered a vehement eulogy on his talents, the goodness of his heart, his consummate integrity, and his unbounded benevolence. Major Scott depicted the baseness of Nundcomar, who, in 1765, had accused Lord Clive as he had subsequently accused Mr. Hastings. On another occasion, the House had passed its decision on the charges; and yet, even after that, the manager had chosen to repeat the accusation of murder against Mr. Hastings. Mr. Bouverie, supported by Sir Joseph Mawbey and some other mem-

May 1.

bers, endeavoured to stifle the business by moving an adjournment; Mr. Fox affirmed that all the allegations in the petition were false, except that relative to Nundcomar, and that was neither fairly nor correctly stated. Mr. Bouverie's motion was negatived on a division*; and on another division†, a committee was appointed to search for precedents. The short-hand writer's notes were produced, and he was personally examined on a report presented by the Marquis of Graham; and the words and the application of them having been fully proved, the Marquis moved that no direction or authority had been given by the House intitling the managers to make any charge against Mr. Hastings respecting the condemnation or execution of Nundcomar; to which, being goaded by observations from the other side, he added, "and that the words uttered by " Mr. Burke ought not to have been spoken." Mr. Fox accused the members on the other side of duplicity; and said their conduct was in the highest degree scandalous and indecent. Colonel Phipps called to order; such language, he said, ought not to be held within those walls, and would not be tolerated among gentlemen, nor perhaps ventured to be spoken in any other place. Mr. Fox said he held the honourable Colonel's words in the utmost contempt; the House was cleared of strangers, and the tempest seems to have subsided. After a long, able, and temperate speech from Mr. Pitt, an amendment, proposed by Mr. Fox, was negatived on a division‡, and the original motion carried.

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4th.

Mr. Burke
censured.

Mr. Bouverie attempted to indemnify Mr. Burke, by moving a vote of thanks to him and the other managers; but the House, after a few words from the Master of the Rolls, passed to the order of the day.

In two days more, Mr. Burke finished his opening. He spoke in terms of regret, not unmingled with disapprobation, of the vote of censure against him; he maintained that his argument respecting Nundcomar was relevant; and he had expressed his feelings by the word murder merely through the poverty of our lan-

May 5, 7.
Continues his
opening.

* 157 to 97.

† 102 to 17.

‡ 135 to 66.

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XC.

1789.

7, 14,
20, 21,
27, 28.
Evidence and
objections.

guage; if that had furnished a word more sufficient to convey his feeling of the complicated atrocity of that act, he would have adopted it.

Mr. Grey then proceeded to examine evidence; and on the documentary part many discussions arose, in which the managers evinced no inconsiderable irritability. An attempt to produce the charges preferred by Nundcomar against Mr. Hastings was successfully resisted by Mr. Law, on the ground that they had not been made upon oath, nor in the presence of the party accused. Mr. Burke termed this opposition audacious. Mr. Law, with great spirit and propriety, declared the expression when applied to a gentleman of the bar to be indecent; but the manager refused to retract it; and when the Lord Chancellor expressed his opinion that, in such a case as the present, delicacy should prevail, then, and afterwards in the course of his argument, by sneering repetitions, rather aggravated than extenuated his offence. Objections by counsel were represented by Mr. Burke as the only means they had of supporting a poor, miserable, desperate cause. Mr. Fox also said, that court was bound only by the *lex et consuetudo parliamenti*; the law of evidence and every other technical rule of proceeding could obtain only as they were consonant to the rules of justice.

Mr. Law, in reply, on behalf of himself and all other persons who might in future appear as advocates at that bar, on behalf of every one who might stand there accused, and on behalf of the whole community of Great Britain, entered his solemn protest against the dangerous doctrine that rules of evidence and distributive justice were to be established in that court, which were not allowed in the courts below.

Both managers expressed unqualified dissatisfaction at the determination in favour of the objections; frequently reminded the court that the eyes of the world were upon them; and often complained because the Lords merely announced their judgments unaccompanied with the reasons on which they were founded.

Living witnesses were then produced, and, for many

June 10 to
July 8.

days, examination, cross-examination, and arguments occupied the court, until at length it was declared by the managers that the evidence on this part of the sixth charge was closed.

As there was no probability of terminating in two or three days the next portion of the charge, and it was intimated that further proceedings would probably be adjourned to the next session, Mr. Hastings read an address, representing the misery and ruin which so long a trial occasioned. If the hearing of a part of one charge out of twenty consumed so much time, his life would probably not be sufficient for him to witness the termination. Had a precedent existed of a man whose trial had been protracted to such a length, or could he have conceived such an event possible, he would at once have pleaded guilty; resting his cause and his character on that truth, which, sooner or later, would shew itself. "What punishment," he concluded, "could your lordships have inflicted on me, so severe "as a life of impeachment?"

In the House of Lords, the Earl of Camden mentioned, in terms of dignified feeling, the appeal that had been thus made; but as the approaching circuit would deprive the House of the assistance of the Judges, the postponement was deemed unavoidable.

On this determination, a paragraph appeared in a newspaper called "The World," importing that the trial would be postponed until another session, unless the Lords had spirit enough to put an end to so shameful a business. The word spirit appeared to Mr. Marsham to render it a gross and scandalous libel on the House, and, on his motion, supported by Mr. Burke, a prosecution by the Attorney-General was ordered.

Early in the following session, Mr. Anstruther opened the residue of the sixth charge. He said, that in order to facilitate and conceal Mr. Hastings's corruption, the orders of his masters were disobeyed, and the whole administration of the revenues thrown into the hands of one who was connected with him as the instrument of iniquity. He had raked the gaols of

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1789.
Evidence.
Charge closed.

Adjournment
intimated.

Address of
Mr. Hastings.

Observations
of Earl
Camden.

Adjournment.

Prosecution
ordered
against a
newspaper.
June 16.

1790.
Feb. 16.
Mr.
Anstruther
opens part
of the sixth
charge.

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1790.

Patna and Calcutta to put persons into the charge of provinces, and from them received large sums of money. A revenue board had been formed, the members of which, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Crofts, Mr. Shore, and Mr. Chartres, acknowledged themselves mere blind instruments, mere tools, in the hands of the Dewan, Gunga Govind Sing, a man hated, feared, and despised by all the natives of India. Deby Sing, another person appointed, was of very bad character, and, through their intervention, the board being their tools, a series of enormous peculations was facilitated. Several specimens of this malversation were detailed, and from one person, who was not named, Mr. Hastings was said to have obtained bribes amounting to £131,000.

Feb. 18 to
June 7.
Evidence.

In the examination of evidence, the same incidents occurred which had distinguished the former parts of the proceeding: objections were taken, some overruled, but by far the greater portion allowed; the managers debated them with extreme warmth, laid down very extensive principles, and sometimes expressed great dissatisfaction at the decisions.

Dissatisfaction
of the
managers.

Feb. 25.

When the Lords had ruled that facts not included in the articles of impeachment could not be given in evidence, Mr. Burke advanced the extraordinary proposition that the Commons of Great Britain were not bound to any rules of pleading; if the matter were sufficient in fact and in equity, the party is bound to give it an answer.

April 22.

Mr. Fox, too, insisted, with his accustomed force and vehemence, on the right of the managers, in proving one misdemeanor, to give evidence of another, not alleged, in aggravation of the first. A question had been asked of a witness named Young, "What impression the letting of the lands to Kelleram and Cullian Sing had made on the minds of the inhabitants of the country?" Mr. Law objected; but Mr. Fox treated the objection as unworthy of an answer. The Lords decided against the managers, and Mr. Fox warmly renewed his former observations, insisting that decisions without reasons given, were not known in any courts of justice in the kingdom; to which the Lord

29th.

Chancellor pithily answered, "In many instances." On a similar occasion, Mr. Burke declared, that the managers must submit to their Lordships, but did not acquiesce in their judgment.

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XC.

1789.
May 4.

Mr. Fox summed up the evidence on this charge. His speech, which lasted two days, was luminous in narrative, clear in argument, and brilliant in eloquence. In concluding, he apologized for mispending, through want of accuracy and method, any portion of time; but yet he hoped that he had proved such a scene of iniquity, both with respect to receiving bribes and collecting the revenues, as would call upon their lordships for not only a verdict of guilty, but a punishment as severe and weighty as ever was inflicted for a misdemeanor.

June 7—9.
Mr. Fox
sums up
the charge.

Thus terminated the proceedings of the third session. Sixty-eight days had been consumed, and only three charges opened; no defence heard, nor any effort made for the prisoner, except the ingenious, and generally irresistible, objections to evidence or to irregular proceeding, which never escaped the vigilance of his learned counsel. When the tedious course of the trial was adverted to, it was frequently affirmed that these objections occasioned the delays; such an assertion is answered by an obvious question: What occasioned the objections? What, but a persevering endeavour of the managers to establish, under colour of their elevated mission, practices and rules of evidence, which, could they have been recognized, would totally have overthrown all the means of protection which a party accused can have against power, art, or malice, in his prosecutors. Had the proposition so often laboured at, that the court could not, where the House of Commons were the accusers, regulate their decisions by those of inferior tribunals, it must have followed that the maxims of the House of Lords could not be of force in the other courts; thus would two distinct species of law have been established, not differing, as the managers argued, like the forms in the courts of chancery and in those of common law, but varying in essential principles; in the admission of hearsay and ru-

Observations
on the close of
the third
session.

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XC.

1789.

mour, in receiving that which was transacted in the absence of the party inculpated as evidence against him, and of admitting acts done by others at a distance from him as crimes of his, without proving that he had directed or sanctioned them.

On the subject of time, it may be observed that, in arguing objections, at least ten times as much was occupied by the managers as by counsel; and that questions three or four times decided by the House, were again brought forward and debated with increased pertinacity.

1790.
Managers permitted to select the charges.

The apparent slowness of the proceedings was not to be ascribed to the managers or to the advocates alone. The Peers themselves had not only diminished the number of days of sitting, but the hours in each day; so that if all the charges had been investigated, there was no probability that the life of Mr. Hastings, or of the greater part of the managers, could have lasted until the end of the trial. Anticipating this inevitable result, Mr. Burke moved two resolutions, declaring that the House, considering the interruptions which had occurred and might occur, did, without meaning to abandon the truth or importance of the charges, authorize the managers to insist on such only as should appear to them the most conducive to speedy and effectual justice; and that the Commons were bound to persevere in the impeachment until judgment might be obtained. These resolutions were slightly objected to, but supported by Mr. Pitt, and they passed on a division*.

May 11.

General Burgoyne's motion against Major Scott. May 21.

A motion, apparently intended as a counterpoise to the censure pronounced on Mr. Burke, was made by General Burgoyne. From a newspaper called "The Diary," he read a letter of Major Scott, containing a severe review of the conduct of the managers, particularly Mr. Burke. His complaint of delay was like the conduct of Richard the Third, in Shakspeare:

" I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl;
" The secret mischiefs that I set abroad,
" I lay unto the grievous charge of others."

* 48 to 31.

He analyzed the proceedings in each session. In the first, thirty-five days, the time of its duration, would have been sufficient for the whole trial; but thirteen had been wasted in speeches. He said wasted, without meaning to detract from the merit of the speakers; for neither the Lords, the Commons, nor the men, women, and children who heard, could possibly recollect a word of them, except Mr. Burke's story of Deby Sing, and Mr. Sheridan's exquisite eulogium on filial love and parental affection. Before the second year, the story of Deby Sing had been effectually disproved by the attestations which Lord Cornwallis had transmitted. All rational men execrated the trial, when Mr. Burke began his second speech of four days. The remainder was chiefly consumed in altercations on evidence; of twelve questions submitted to their lordships, ten were determined against the managers, and two in their favour. In the third year, four questions on evidence, referred to the Lords, had, under the advice of the judges, been determined against the managers.

Major Scott, disavowing any intention to invade the privileges of the House, justified himself, by shewing that his letter did not warrant the constructions put upon it; by quoting passages, much more powerful and severe, from speeches and pamphlets published by Mr. Burke, Mr. Sheridan, and General Burgoyne himself: he held in his hands, he said, twelve speeches and pamphlets written by Mr. Burke, from each of which he could extract expressions infinitely stronger than any he had used. His defence.

After some vigorous observations, the House adjourned, for a few days, to allow time for considering the paper.

A motion was next made, denominating the letter scandalous and libellous, reflecting on the honour and justice of the House, and the conduct of the managers. Mr. Wigley having suggested that the speech of Major Scott was sufficiently apologetical to justify their abstaining from further proceeding, Mr. Burke expressed May 27.
Mr. Burke. equal indignation and astonishment at discovering that,

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1790.

instead of an apology or an indication of repentance, the House had been additionally insulted by an audacious avowal of the libel, and a direct recrimination on individual managers; and while, with his usual vehemence, he reprobated the conduct of Mr. Hastings and his friends, he professed his contempt of their libels; they were not, he said, remarkable either for elegance of style, beauty of composition, or force of argument; but the House ought to mark to the whole world their detestation of the system practised by the criminals of India to defeat the justice of the nation.

After some observations from Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Dundas, the resolution was carried.

General Burgoyne then moved, that, for his gross and scandalous offence, Major Scott should be reprimanded at the bar by the Speaker. The words gross and scandalous were rejected, and the reprimand directed to be undergone by the offender, not at the bar, but in his place. In executing this duty, the Speaker expressed himself in terms which, while they abundantly maintained the dignity and authority of the House, called forth the grateful acknowledgments of Major Scott, by their politeness and liberality.

28th.
Major Scott
reprimanded
in his place.

State of public
feeling on the
prosecution.

1789.
9th Dec.

Notwithstanding every effort made by the managers and their friends, in Parliament, in publications, or in prosecutions, the impeachment became daily more unpopular. The censure on Major Scott was, as to its effect, almost ludicrous, and the trial of Stockdale had no effect but that of adding an unfading leaf to the laurels of Mr. Erskine, and the triumphant acquittal of the defendant*. Nor was the cause of Mr. Hastings left unsupported: the press, in all its departments, was engaged in his service, and solid volumes, satirical poems, and abusive paragraphs, were unsparingly poured out on the occasion.

1790.
Supposition
that the im-
peachment
would abate.

On the dissolution of Parliament, rumours were circulated that a new House of Commons would consider the impeachment abated, and that the trial would not be resumed.

* Howell's State Trials, vol. ii. p. 237. Erskine's Speeches, vol. xxii. p. 205.

At the earliest moment, even before the address on the King's speech had been moved, Mr. Burke drew attention to the sacred pledge of virtue, spirit, and firm perseverance, which the late House had bequeathed, with its dying breath.

CHAP.
XC.

1790.
Nov. 30.
Mr. Burke
recommends
a continuance.

It was maintained by several members, and particularly by Mr. Erskine, who displayed on the occasion great and laborious research, adorned with the well-known beauties of his eloquence, that, by the dissolution of Parliament, the impeachment had altogether abated, or, at all events, could not be resumed in statu quo. The contrary opinion was strenuously supported by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington, who produced a great number of precedents, by Mr. Burke and several other members. The portion of several long debates, which was purely technical, could hardly be made intelligible in an abridgment, and the observations offered by Mr. Burke on the views and characters of lawyers, with the answers of Mr. Erskine, are not now of sufficient interest to warrant repetition. Finally, Mr. Erskine's proposal for a committee to search for precedents was negatived by a great majority*.

Dec. 17, 22, 23.

Considering that Mr. Burke was the original mover in this question, and how dear the cause was to him, it would seem extraordinary that his exertions in the debate were almost confined to skirmishings and personalities, while the Speaker took upon himself the labour of selecting precedents, and Mr. Pitt that of discussing them in answer to Mr. Erskine; but Mr. Burke privately declared, that, although he was firm in his judgment, and ready with precedents, he was desirous that Mr. Pitt's concurrence in his opinions should be generally known†.

Motives of
Mr. Burke.

Soon after the recess, Mr. Burke moved, that, in consideration of the length of time which had already elapsed, it would be proper to proceed to no other parts of the impeachment but those on which the managers had already closed their evidence, and those relating to contracts, pensions, and allowances. He

1791.
Feb. 14.
Some charges
abandoned.

Mr. Burke's
observations.

* 143 to 30.

† From private information, and an unpublished letter of Mr. Burke.

CHAP.
XC.

1791.

had thought, in the beginning, that the trial would last three years, and, during its progress, had endeavoured to avoid unnecessary delay, but had failed. Nor was the progress in a case like this to be judged by examples drawn from ordinary proceedings in actions or on indictments.

Attempts to
terminate the
proceedings.

Several members endeavoured to terminate the trial altogether. Mr. Jekyll moved an amendment to that effect; but it does not appear to have been seconded. Mr. Sumner proposed an adjournment, which was rejected by a great majority*. Two other divisions took place on the wording of the resolution; but it passed as originally framed†. The former managers were again appointed; and a message, praying that a day might be fixed for proceeding in the impeachment, was delivered at the bar of the upper house by Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt being on his right hand, Mr. Fox on his left, and about one hundred members in his train.

17th.
Message to the
Lords.

Committee
appointed.

April 19.

On the motion of Lord Grenville, the great constitutional question, "whether impeachments abate" "by the dissolution of Parliament," was referred to a committee of all peers, who attended during the session. A long and elaborate report was produced†, and ordered to be taken into consideration after the Easter recess.

May 16.
Discussion on
their report.

When it came to be discussed, Lord Porchester, without preface, moved for a message to the other House, acquainting them that the Lords would proceed on the trial.

The Lord
Chancellor.

The Lord Chancellor considered this question premature, until the House should have decided whether the impeachment had abated or not, and, if not, whether it remained in statu quo. By what process or form of proceeding could that man be called on, who was now neither a prisoner nor under bail; and in case of his not appearing, could they proceed on his recognizance? On this point, the Earl of Radnor moved that the judges should attend to deliver

* 231 to 26.

† First division, 194 to 54; second, 161 to 79.

† Lords' Journals, vol. xxxix. pp. 125 to 169.

their opinions ; but this proposition was rejected, and the original motion adopted*. A protest, signed by one peer only, was entered on the Journals.

CHAP.
XC.

1791.
23rd.
The trial re-
sumed.

In pursuance of this decision, the court resumed its sittings ; but all interest in the matter was sunk to the lowest ebb ; even curiosity was extinguished. The attendance of peers on this and the succeeding days was very small, never so many as twenty-five, sometimes only eighteen ; the managers appeared only in sufficient force to avoid the imputation of deserting their cause ; and the members of Parliament and the public shewed equal indifference. The great events which were in progress on the Continent, and the interest excited by them, may in some degree account for this languor ; but the length of the prosecution, the anticipation of its failure, and a generous feeling toward the defendant, certainly had a powerful operation.

The Honourable Andrew St. John opened the fourth charge, generally accusing Mr. Hastings of having established, in India, a prodigal, but above all, a corrupt, system of government. The particulars alleged were—that he had, in 1781, illegally given a contract for opium to Mr. Stephen Sullivan, son of the chairman of the Directors. This gentleman arrived in Bengal only in October 1780 ; he was on the same day appointed an assistant counsellor, the judge advocate, and hardly was he invested with these offices before he also obtained the inconsistent employment of contractor for the opium lands, with new agreements, particularly favourable to his interests. This contract he had immediately sold, at a considerable advance, to Mr. Benn ; and he again, with a further gain, to Mr. Young.

Mr. St. John
opens the
fourth charge.

The second crime charged was that of having engaged the Company in a smuggling transaction with China. If this affair could have been attended with gain, it was at least a disgrace to the British character ; but the real result had been a great loss.

In the third place stood the contract for draught

* 70 to 20, and 66 to 18.

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XC.

1791.

bullocks during the war ; it had been entered into in contravention of the express command of the Directors, to the great detriment of the service.

Two more heads of charge remained ; an agency given to Mr. Auriol for the relief of the distressed inhabitants of Madras : charity, which covers a multitude of sins, was the pretext ; but the real object was corruption ; and a large commission was allowed to Mr. Auriol. Another agency had been conferred on Mr. Belli, to supply the garrison of Fort William with stores and provisions. Every one of these transactions was attended with great loss to the Company, the collective amount of which was £584,381, exclusive of the portion sustained by the Nabob of Oude.

Powerful illustration and daring flights of eloquence could hardly have been expected in a speech upon matters so purely of business. Mr. St. John did not attempt them, nor did he supply their place with any violent invective or vituperation.

Address of
Mr. Hastings.

When he had concluded, Mr. Hastings addressed the court, complaining of the duration of the proceedings. He felt it as a cruel lot imposed on him, to be tried by one generation, and, should he live so long, to expect judgment from another.

Lord Kenyon.

Lord Kenyon, who sat for the Lord Chancellor, informed him that if he had any petition to present, it must be delivered in the chamber of Parliament ; and this direction was followed.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Burke expressed himself in his accustomed tone of furious indignation on the appeal of the defendant, and, exceeding by far the limits of the articles of impeachment before the House, described him as guilty of almost every possible crime and enormity.

Mr. Law.

Mr. Law, having interrupted him, to express a wish that he would shew where any murders or crimes, such as he was stating, were charged against Mr. Hastings, drew on himself the storm he sought to avert from his client.

Mr Burke.

Mr. Burke angrily desired that counsel would not use to the Commons of Great Britain the petulance of stopping them ; they might answer them ; the Commons charged heavy crimes ; in Cheyt Sing's case,

murders—the murders of the English sepoys; every drop of blood unjustly shed by the prisoner was a murder. “We charge robberies, we charge tortures, “we charge a complete scene of cruelty and corruption in every part of it.”

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XC.

1791.

As to the length of time occupied in the trial, he proceeded, much had been consumed in objections to evidence: but for them, the managers would have closed all the twenty charges. They had abandoned a portion of them, because the mode of defence induced a perpetual discussion of evidence. They preferred incomplete justice to none at all.

Nothing could be more remote from candour than these latter remarks. It is very true that any trial may be shortened, if the party accused admits as evidence all that the law forbids to be introduced; but, in the present case, the blame of wasting time did not rest on the counsel for the prisoner, but on the managers, who, comprising in their body several eminent barristers of long practice, and having also secured to themselves the assistance of eminent standing counsel, not only brought forward, as evidence, matter which a young and inexperienced advocate could hardly have advised, but reproduced, and, after repeated decisions against them, re-argued the points with unabated perseverance, and at a pitiless length.

Observations.

Sir James Erskine St. Clair undertook the examination of evidence. It occupied three days, and, as usual, gave rise to many arguments; but the points were decided by Lord Kenyon, who sat for the Chancellor, and the Peers did not once retire to their own chamber. Some of the matters charged were transacted without the knowledge of Mr. Hastings; others were perfectly according to the usual routine of business; and it was shewn that the contraband traffic, as it was called, of sending opium to China, far from being deemed a disgrace to the British name, was still continued, with the knowledge and under the sanction of the Board of Control.

May 23, 25, 27.
Evidence.

Sir James Erskine St. Clair having summed up the evidence, in a clear, well-ordered, and manly speech,

May 30.
Sir James Erskine St. Clair sums up.

CHAP.
XC.

1791.
Lord Stormont
Mr. Burke.

Lord Stormont submitted that it would be expedient to learn from counsel when they would be ready to proceed with the defence; when Mr. Burke, without allowing time for an answer, or even a moment's consultation on the question, addressed the court on the charges, the probable defence, and the complaints which had been made of intemperate language.

May 27.
Mr. Loveden's
motion in the
House of Com-
mons.

Before this period, Mr. Loveden had moved, in the House of Commons, for an address to the King, praying him to continue the session, without prorogation, until judgment in this trial were given. He incurred the ridicule of Mr. Burke by citing, both in Latin and in English, the passage in Magna Charta, "Nulli ne-
"gabimus, nulli vendemus, aut deferemus justitiam;" but Mr. Dundas observing that there would remain in town a very few peers to give, and probably barely a sufficient number of their own members to demand, a judgment, Mr. Fox proposed an amendment, which was negatived on a division*, as the original motion was, without that form.

Mr. Dundas.

Mr. Fox.

June 3.
Speech of Mr.
Hastings.

When next the court assembled, Mr. Hastings, labouring under severe indisposition, read to them a pathetic address, describing the injury he endured from the protraction of his trial; every year had deprived him of some of his witnesses and removed some of his judges. Without consulting his learned counsel, to whose abilities and zeal he owed the highest obligations, he declared that he was willing and desirous to waive his defence and to refer himself to their immediate judgment, if that judgment might be immediate. "For my acquittal," he said, "I trust most confidently
"to the evidence adduced by my prosecutors them-
"selves, satisfied that not one criminal allegation has
"been established, and almost every one refuted, either
"by the answers of their witnesses or by their own
"extracts, partial and mutilated as they were, from
"written documents. Your Lordships will try my
"conduct by the evidence which my accusers have
"brought before you, not by their speeches. They
"were sent to accuse me and to prove their accusa-

“ tion, not to revile me ; much less to expatiate, with
 “ all the licence of unrestrained declamation, on crimes
 “ with which their constituents have not authorized
 “ them to charge me.”

CHAP.
 XC.

1791.

He then proceeded to argue in refutation of the charges one by one. It was alleged that he had ruined the country committed to his care ; it was proved that he had advanced the revenues from three to five millions a-year, and that they were still increasing. He was charged with having violated treaties and brought disgrace on the British name ; but there were on the table of the House of Commons letters from the native princes to his successor, requesting the same treatment that they had experienced from him. “ Two years ago,” he said, “ when the attestations to my character were produced, my accuser found his situation very awkward ; the people of whose oppression he complained denying the truth of his charges. In a figurative manner of speaking, he said, that the hands which signed the testimonials were yet warm with the thumb-screws by which their assent had been extorted. This absurdity required no answer. My influence in India has long ceased ; it is very seldom that mankind are grateful enough to do even common justice to a fallen minister ; and I believe there never was an instance of an injured people rising up voluntarily to bear false testimony in favour of a distant and persecuted oppressor.”

He fully explained the circumstances of Cheyt Sing, the Begums, the presents, and particularly he corrected a mistake he had committed in fixing the time when he indorsed certain bonds as the property of the Company, shewing that it made no difference as to the fact. They had been indorsed in May 1782, instead of 1781, and left in the possession of Government until transmitted, at his request, in 1789, by Lord Cornwallis.

In like manner, he analyzed and answered the five charges comprised under the head “ Contracts and Allowances ;” explained the real situation of Mr. Sullivan ; vindicated the army contracts as perfectly

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1791.

just in themselves, and rendered indispensably necessary by the state of India, and the situation of Sir Eyre Coote.

On a very striking part of Mr Burke's opening, he animadverted in these terms: "As to the story told by the manager of the horrid cruelties practised on the natives of Dinjapore by Debi Sing, it will be sufficient to say that he never ventured, however strongly pressed and urged, to introduce it in the form of a charge. Mr. Paterson, on whose authority he had relied, had generously written to express his sincere concern at finding his report turned to my disadvantage: I had acted, throughout all the transactions in which Debi Sing was concerned, as might be expected from a man of humanity. I was the first person to give Mr. Paterson an ill opinion of Debi Sing, in employing whom I yielded my opinion to the experience of Mr. Anderson and Mr. Shore. From the inquiry into his conduct, the result appears to have been, although not entirely innocent, yet he was not guilty in any sort of proportion to the magnitude of the charges against him; and particularly the most horrid of those horrible acts, so artfully detailed and with so much effect, had never been committed at all.

"As members of Parliament, ministers had voted to impeach him for accepting an illegal delegation to Oude, and for forming arrangements with the Nabob Vizier; yet those arrangements were still subsisting; and, in four separate letters, approved, and ordered to be invariably maintained; and the minister for India had taken credit every year for the regularly paid subsidy which it procured."

After recapitulating his employments and services from 1750, when he first went to India, he said, "To the Commons of England, in whose name I am arraigned for desolating the provinces of their dominion, I dare to reply that they are (and their representatives annually persist in asserting it) the most flourishing of all the states in India. It was I who made them so; the valour of others acquired, I

“enlarged and gave them shape and consistency; I preserved them; I sent forth your armies with an effectual, but an economical hand, through unknown and hostile regions, to the support of your other possessions—to the retrieval of one from degradation and dishonour, and the other from utter loss and subjection.” He added other facts relative to his administration, and said, “I gave you all, and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace, and a life of impeachment. When I was arraigned for acts of injustice, oppression, cruelty, and rapacity, committed on the princes, nobles, and commonalty of Hindostan, the natives of all ranks came forward, unsolicited, to clear my reputation from unmerited obloquy. They manifested a generosity of which we have no example in the European world; they shewed a sense of gratitude for the benefits they had received: I wish I could say as much of my own countrymen.”

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XC.

1791.

If there were sufficient time for a final judgment before the prorogation, he would cheerfully rest his cause where it stood; but if otherwise, he trusted he should not be precluded from using such means of defence as his counsel might advise.

In their own chamber, the Lords resolved to proceed further in the trial on the first Tuesday in the next session.

Adjournment.

CHAPTER THE NINETY-FIRST.

1792 to 1795.

Trial of Warren Hastings continued.—1792—Defence by Mr. Law.—Mr Plumer on the Benares charge.—Evidence.—Cross-examinations.—Observations.—Mr. Markham.—Mr. Dallas sums up.—Mr. Hastings's address.—Captain Symes examined.—Resignation of Lord Thurlow.—1793. Mr. Law opens defence on the Begum charge.—Evidence. Mr. Hastings appeals against further delay.—Report of a Committee.—Evidence continued—to the character of Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Plumer's summing-up.—Mr. Dallas opens the defence on corruption.—Mr. Hastings offers to forego his right to a general summing-up.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Fox.—Evidence.—Mr. Auriol.—Observations of the Archbishop of York.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Hastings's supposed wealth.—Evidence on contracts.—Testimonials to character.—Defence closed.—Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke.—Changes in the House of Lords—further delay.—Debates in the House of Commons.—Mr. Burke's motion.—Mr. Grey proposes postponement.—Motion lost. Mr. Grey.—Mr. Burke—called to order—delay carried.—Mr. Whitbread's motion against a newspaper.—Mr. Francis—Mr. Dundas—Mr. Burke—Mr. Fox.—Adjournment carried.—1794.—Return of Marquis Cornwallis.—He and Mr. Larkins are proposed as witnesses.—Arrangement. Mr. Grey.—Mr. Francis called.—Objections—which prevail.—Altercations.—Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Hastings.—Further delay.—Evidence of the Marquis Cornwallis—cross-examined.—Mr. Larkins.—Mr. Burke. Mr. Hastings.—Cross-examination of Mr. Larkins.—Proceedings on Nobkissen's Bill in Chancery—not admitted

in evidence.—Mr. Burke proposes to inquire into the Mahratta war—refused by the Lords.—Anger of Mr. Burke. Further evidence produced by the managers.—Mr. Grey sums up the Benares charge.—Mr. Sheridan sums up the Begum charge—Mr. Fox that on presents—Mr. Taylor that on contracts.—Altered behaviour toward Mr. Hastings. Mr. Fox.—Observations of Mr. Burke.—His general reply. Committee of the House of Commons to inspect journals. Report prepared by Mr. Burke published.—Attacked by Lord Thurlow.—Answer of Mr. Burke.—Mr. Pitt moves a vote of thanks to the managers ;—opposed by Mr. Ewan Law. Observations of Mr. Francis.—Vote carried.—Communicated by the Speaker.—1795.—Select Committee of the Lords. Committee of the whole House.—Observations of the Marquis of Lansdowne.—Votes on the several articles of impeachment.—Mr. Hastings acquitted.—Observations.—Mr. Burke retires from Parliament.—Observations on his conduct during the trial.—His feelings.—Conduct of the other managers.—Mr. Hastings after the acquittal.—His fortune. Motions at the India House.—Grant to him.—Vote of approbation.—Address from Calcutta.—His reception in the House of Commons—at Oxford—at Carlton House.—A statue erected to his honour.

ON an early day in the ensuing session, Mr. Law, as leading counsel for the prisoner, entered on his defence.

In his exordium, he spoke of the exulting satisfaction with which the defendant, after an anxious period of more than four years, saw the moment arrive, in which it was permitted him to vindicate his name and character, and with it the name and character of the British nation, equally implicated. It was one of many fit subjects of thankfulness, that a constitution, exhausted and enfeebled by the vicissitudes of climate, and the fatigues of incessant occupation, had not sunk under either the violence or the terrors of the accusation ; that the managers had contented themselves

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21.
Defence by
Mr. Law.

with pursuing little more than one-fifth, in substance, of the twenty articles which he was required to meet; that, through this indulgence, he had it yet in probable contemplation to be restored once more to the rights of civil, and to the comforts of social, life.

Mr. Law then noticed the unparalleled eloquence which had been employed in the prosecution, and expressed his apprehension that his efforts would suffer great disparagement, since to the taste of judges thus pampered and almost corrupted with such luscious delicacies, he had nothing to offer but the plain and simple food, the dry husk, it might be termed, of fact and argument. He vindicated himself from the charge of creating delay; it had been occasioned only by the resistance of improper evidence, and in twenty, out of twenty-three instances, the decisions had been against the managers.

Adverting to the strong language which had been used against his client, he admitted that it had been paralleled by Sir Edward Coke's treatment of Sir Walter Raleigh; but he instanced the milder conduct of prosecutors in more recent times, particularly that of Sir Clement Worr, in the case of Atterbury; and that of Sir William Murray, afterward Lord Mansfield, when prosecuting Lord Lovat.

He recapitulated the history of India, declining to carry their lordships through the Hindoo or Braminical era, in which an honourable manager wanted at pleasure: he could find no authority respecting it but those of Herodotus, and of other historians, who relate the situation in which that country was found by the companions of Alexander; "beyond this," he said, "all is made up of dream and fiction, fit only to pass through the ivory gate, at which I consign the un-envied charge to others." The Court had been told that, neither in that country nor in any other, had there existed such a thing as arbitrary power; but, in vindication of the English system, he would undertake to shew that, up to the period when it was blessed by the administration of the English, that country had been the devoted seat of every thing detestable in the shape

of misgovernment and tyranny. Pursuing this theme, the learned advocate, with great ingenuity, clearness, and force, placed under consideration the whole history of India, ancient, modern, and recent, proving, from what happened in the times of Tamerlane and other conquerors, and under all rulers in all times, that in all their governments, tyranny, rapine, religious persecution, murder, and cruelty had always prevailed.

Proceeding, then, more particularly to the case of his client, Mr. Law complained of the unfair manner in which the shocking and atrocious fable of Debi Sing had been introduced. In contempt of the duty of a public accuser, Mr. Burke had advanced these allegations without the indispensable foundations; without a reasonable and probable assurance that they were true, or applicable to the party accused. Mr. Hastings had in vain petitioned that this allegation might distinctly be made the subject of a charge, that he might have an opportunity of refuting it.

Mr. Law then reviewed the financial acts of Mr. Hastings, in which he had done every thing to bind up and close the bleeding arteries of profusion; retrenched every unnecessary expense, adding nearly two millions a year to the resources in Bengal, and a million sterling to the fund established to relieve the government from distress, and discharge their debts; had settled upon the best foundation every political, financial, civil, and commercial regulation; raised the affairs of the Company and his own fame to that eminence, from which it baffled all the counteraction, both at home and abroad, of an able, active, confederate, and hostile majority to remove him; and in February 1785 he left the country restored to that situation of peace, plenty, order, and security in which he had originally placed it in 1774, just before the landing of the council-general.

He detailed the acts of that council; vindicated the appointment, conduct, and proceedings of Gunga Govind Sing; defended the exertions of Mr. Hastings in the Mahratta war; and his timely and judicious

provision for the security of the Bengal frontier, when he was apprized of the hostility of France. This led to the demand on Cheyt Sing, and the subsequent proceedings which had been known to and unnoticed by the House of Commons during three whole years, although afterwards brought out as matter of crimination. He powerfully contrasted the spirit of Mr. Hastings, in sending an aid of fifteen lacks to relieve the Madras government in 1780, with the frigid political pusillanimity of Mr. Francis, who would have reduced or withheld the supply.

In a forcible manner, Mr. Law contrasted the language employed against his client at the bar, with the terms in which he was mentioned by the people of India; the language of those who did not know him, with that used by men who, under the blessings of his beneficent administration, had lived protected and happy for thirteen years. He selected some of the bitter expressions used by Mr. Burke and others, wherein Mr. Hastings was said to have a heart blackened to the very blackest; gangrened to the very core; to be the chief and captain-general of iniquity; one in whom all the frauds, all the peculations, all the tyranny in India were embodied; to have the foulest heart that ever existed in the bosom of man; to have advanced in the progress of vice, from a bare simple lie to the basest murder. To these violent assertions, Mr. Law opposed the attestations long in the possession of the House of Commons and printed by their order, in which whole bodies of men gave their attestation, not by a mere signature, but by the solemnities of their religion, invoking the Divine Being for the truth of that which they signed and uttered.

Mr. Law then explained and vindicated the conduct of Mr. Hastings with respect to the revenues and contracts, and animadverted very strongly on the conduct of Mr. Francis, who, retiring from the dangers with which Bengal was beset to the safety of his native land, diffused, by his manifesto from St. Helena, the alarm and terror he had long laboured to communicate to all parts of the world, respecting the state of

India. On the subject of Cheyt Sing, it had been said, that, in going up the country to his capital, Mr. Hastings had violated a positive command of the Company; now, in fact, the order referred to was made in 1702; it had been completely disregarded ever since we began to acquire a political authority in India, and had been finally rescinded in September 1772. The Begum, he contended, was in a state of open rebellion against the British government, to which she was a subject; by so doing, she renounced all claim to our guaranty under the treaty of Chunar; the Vizier re-entered into his old rights; upon which our demand for our old debt immediately attached. He examined the charge with respect to presents, contending that they had all been received for the Company and carried to their account; and, between September 1781, and March 1783, two millions and some hundred thousand pounds had been supplied to carry on the war with Hyder Ally and his successor. After some justificatory observations on the contracts, the learned counsel, in eloquent, energetic, and spirited terms, reviewed the whole political life of Mr. Hastings; and, from its evident propriety, attested by all classes, not during the plenitude of his power, but after he had divested himself of the robe of greatness, shewed that he was amply entitled, in this country, to the same applause and gratitude which he had so well acquired in India.

In conclusion, Mr. Law made an eloquent and spirited appeal to the judgment of their Lordships, in behalf of a man whose public life had undergone a scrutiny of unparalleled extent and strictness; who committed his fame, his honour, every thing valuable to him on this side the grave, to the wisdom and justice of their tribunal.

Mr. Plumer then addressed the Court on the first, or Benares, article. The measures to be considered, being for the most part admitted, the principal question was, whether they originated in the bad and corrupt intention imputed to them, or arose from a laudable desire to discharge the task of duty. He would

Feb. 23, 29.
March 1.
Mr. Plumer's
speech on the
Benares
article.

divide it into two general heads, as it respected Cheyt Sing, and the province of Benares; the man he was charged to have ruined in consequence of preconceived malice, and the province by misrule and misconduct. Cheyt Sing, as Zemindar or landholder, was a tributary and subject; and not an independent prince, nor exempted from any of the duties of a subject. This assertion he supported by reference to history and treaties; he shewed the origin of the connexion between the English government and the family of Cheyt Sing, the unfriendly and faithless conduct of his father, Bulwant Sing, and himself. How different was the manner in which the managers viewed the conduct of two parties. In Cheyt Sing, no motive existed but self-interest, yet his proceedings were deemed highly laudable; in Mr. Hastings, the love of his country and zeal for his employers alone had prevailed; but with respect to him, other motives were to be assiduously sought out and unfairly imputed.

Mr. Plumer treated with sarcastic severity the observation Mr. Burke had made respecting character and witnesses at the Old Bailey. "Mr. Hastings produces the testimonials of all that lived under him; they say, we never looked upon him as a cruel man, a stern tyrant, a despot, possessing a foul black heart, gangrened to the core. When he produces all this, oh! the manager exclaims, these people know nothing of the matter. I, in my own library, know it all; I know the injuries you sustained; I have seen the stripes you have had, although you are so dull and stupid that you never discovered them; you are a set of tame, insipid drivellers, and do not know the truth. Then if he is to call European witnesses, they are a banditti, and he the captain-general; they are all accomplices in the same wickedness; they come to support their captain-general, while in fact they are his gang."

To shew the general correctness of Mr. Hastings's conduct in July 1778, when news, not to be doubted, although not formally authenticated, arrived of a war with France, a long series of documents was referred

to, proving the accuracy of his views and the propriety of his demand on Cheyt Sing, and justifying all his transactions with and relating to him up to the requisition of a subsidy in 1780.

April 24, 26.

After a long adjournment, occasioned by the spring circuits, Mr. Plumer resumed his opening, explaining the requisition of a body of cavalry in the latter end of 1780, justifying the opinion pronounced by Mr. Hastings of the conduct and designs of Cheyt Sing, his declared intention of going to Benares, and subsequent events, particularly the rebellion in August 1781. He shewed the urgent necessity, enforced by Sir Eyre Coote, for demanding aid after the capture of Colonel Bailey's detachment, and the non-compliance of the Rajah, produced in part by a message from one of the Begums at Fyzabad. A rebellion against the English government, meditated in 1779, was prevented by prudent advice, which was listened to by Bulward Sing; but the intention was never abandoned. Cheyt Sing had clandestinely augmented his military establishment, strengthened his forts, and collected his troops, increased them to the number of forty thousand, while his fortresses and stores exhibited every mark of the progress of an European laboratory, derived in some part from the French. He was tampering with our sepoys to desert and enlist with him, and making the country an asylum for fugitive rebels from the neighbouring territories. If immediate resistance was not in contemplation, it was to depend on the event of a Mahratta invasion, or the arrival of a French armament. Hoping, by his personal presence, to bring him back to his duty, Mr. Hastings went, but was not accompanied with a force calculated to alarm our numerous enemies or indicate any dissension among ourselves. He supported these observations by a minute statement of all the events attending Mr. Hastings's visit to Benares, the co-operation of the Begums, the plan for the general extirpation of the English, and several inhuman massacres which were perpetrated toward its completion, contending that Mr. Hastings was not guilty of any harshness; that

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he was justified in arresting Cheyt Sing, and not listening to terms of accommodation after his conduct. He equally exculpated Mr. Hastings with respect to the attack of Bidjegur, and the seizure of the treasure by the army, after Cheyt Sing had carried off the bulk of his wealth, and the subsequent appointment of Mehinnarain as Zemindar.

In conclusion he said, "The arrangements that have been made by Mr. Hastings do all, I believe, or the greatest part of them, continue to the present day. To this day, Mehinnarain is continued the Zemindar, although it is charged that Cheyt Sing was unjustly expelled; the tribute, said to be unjustly raised, has been received by the Company without reduction; all the regulations of the country as to the duties are continued to the present hour; the military force, instead of depending on the temporary character of the Rajah, is united, so as to leave no danger in a future contest; the revenue, the population, the commerce, the police, the justice of the country in every respect, have been happily administered."

May 1 to
June 9.
Evidence.

Evidence was then produced to shew, by his own correspondence as far back as 1764, that Bulwant Sing did not consider himself an independent prince, but a mere tributary, and, by consultations in council, that he was recognized only in that character. Viscount Stormont proved, that, when he was ambassador at Paris in 1778, he had instructed Mr. Elliot to apprise Mr. Hastings and General Clavering of the probability of hostilities with France: documents were read, shewing the demands made in consequence on Cheyt Sing, and his conduct; the pressing necessities of the military service in 1780; the urgent application made to Cheyt Sing, and his false promises to Mr. Fowke. Evidence was also produced, extending backward to the year 1760, shewing that the supposed illegal delegation of the powers of the Council to the Governor General had been frequently practised, with the knowledge and approbation of the Court of Directors.

Oral testimony, highly favourable to the defendant, was given by several witnesses, by Major Osborne, Mr. Markham, son of the Archbishop of York, Sir John Borrel, Colonel Blair, and other gentlemen who had served in India, both in the civil and military departments. They were all rigidly cross examined, and several objections to the evidence were raised; but in these the Parliamentary managers were not so successful as the counsel for the defendant had been. Some memorable displays of heat took place. On one occasion, Mr. Law appealed to what the managers and counsel owed to their common character. "Com-mon!" Mr. Burke angrily exclaimed; "I never can suffer the dignity of the House of Commons to be implicated in the common character of the bar: the learned counsel may take care of his own."

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Cross-examin-
ation of
witnesses.

Altercation.

In the cross-examination of Mr. Markham, which was of great length, and conducted entirely by Mr. Burke, the intimate friend of his father, a very uncommon circumstance occurred. The right honourable manager had in his possession a letter, written by the witness to the Archbishop in January 1782, on his going with Mr. Hastings to Benares. It had been lent to Mr. Burke, as a member of the select committee, and not returned. It was, as he said, mislaid; but by mere accident, just at the present period, it was found, in looking over some papers. A few minutes before he came into court, on the fifth day of his examination, this letter was put into Mr. Markham's hands, certain passages being marked in pencil, with an observation that, as the transaction took place so many years ago, perhaps he might wish to render some parts of his evidence more exact. Mr. Markham, on being called, stated this transaction; at his desire, his letter was read; and, far from supporting the suggestion that it would enable him to correct his evidence, it confirmed every important fact he had advanced; nor had he to apologize for any thing his letter contained, on the ground of recent impression or imperfect information. On the other hand, it appeared to many that the cross-examination of Mr. Markham proceeded

Mr. Markham.

May 30.

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mainly on propositions derived from the letter thus strangely retained for nearly ten years, and thus strangely found, transmitted, and pencilled, at a moment when the only effect to be hoped from it was the embarrassment and disgrace of the writer. The effect of the transaction was to dissolve entirely, or rather to convert into distaste and hostility, the sentiments of friendship which for so many years had subsisted between two men so worthy of each other's esteem as the Archbishop and the Senator*.

Undeterred by the fear of any observations to which it might give rise, Mr. Markham did not hesitate to aver, that, being confidentially acquainted with Mr. Hastings's sentiments before he went to Benares, and at that place he had never discovered the least symptom of a malicious or unfriendly disposition toward Cheyt Sing, or the operation of any private motive on Mr. Hastings's mind, he did not think him capable of any thing malicious or self-interested. In public and in private life, he had always found him most zealous wherever the public was concerned; perfectly careless of his own interests: "I believe him," he added, "to be the most virtuous man of the age he lives in." Other witnesses gave testimony of similar import, although not so forcibly expressed.

June 9, 11, 12.
Mr. Dallas
sums up.

Mr. Dallas, in a speech of great eloquence and forcible reasoning, summed up the evidence on this charge. Referring to the terms of the impeachment, he argued that, unless the managers could establish the criminal motive to which the demands on Cheyt Sing were imputed, their case must fail.

With great force, and with all the charm of originality, he renewed the propositions laid down by his learned colleagues. Arguing all these propositions, and analysing the evidence, he shewed that Mr. Francis had been far more earnest and active than Mr. Hastings in enforcing the demand on the Rajah, and that

* I have been informed, by a learned and most intimate friend of Mr. Burke, that a correspondence respecting the authorship of Junius's Letters contributed to, if it did not produce, this alienation; but I am not informed of the date of such correspondence; an open declaration of dislike had not taken place till this period.

the intelligence of hostile designs on the part of France was sufficiently authentic to justify the measure, and to repel the charge of false pretence, injustice, and malice. He also animadverted on the letter, which, after remaining in Mr. Burke's possession ten years, had been, by mere accident, found on the fourth day of Mr. Markham's examination, and which, when read, did not vary in the minutest particular, from the evidence so recently given.

Mr. Dallas then recapitulated, in energetic terms, the circumstances of the Rajah's opposition and flight, while the small British force was massacred, at the very time when Cheyt Sing was endeavouring to deceive the Governor General by letters of feigned submission. He displayed, in strong terms, the ferocious hostility of the Rajah's mother. Placed in the fortress of Gwalla, on an elevated rock, the gentle Parma employed herself in acts of unmitigated hostility to the British forces. She had the command of that fort which, day after day, poured down its fire on our troops; and yet Parma, in this very occupation, had been most aptly compared by an honorable manager to the wife and mother of Darius in the tent.

He vindicated the seizure of the treasures of Bidjegur, the appointment of Mehpnarain, the increase of tribute, the removal of Durbedgy Sing, the conduct of Mr. Hastings in all these transactions being the subject of approbation and thanks, both in India and at home, while British justice, so pompously invoked and so splendidly eulogized, retained, without recompense or restitution, all that was described as the plunder and spoliation of an individual. He concluded with an animated, though not overstrained, panegyric on the general character of his client.

Little further progress was made in the trial during this session. In the course of it, Mr. Hastings again addressed his judges, remarking that, in the first session, the court sat thirty-five days, generally assembling at noon, sometimes earlier; while, in the present, which had been nearly of equal duration, their days of sitting had been only sixteen; their hour of

Adjournment.

June 6.
Mr. Hastings's
address.

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Captain
Symes
examined.

meeting seldom earlier than two. Among his witnesses was one who, being settled with his family in the south of France, had come to England in the first year of the trial, and remained ever since, in yearly expectation of giving his evidence. Another, Captain Symes, whose testimony was important to the present charge, had remained, in expectation of being heard, until his exhausted finances obliged him to join the forces under Lord Cornwallis. He was now returned; and the court acceded to the petition of the defendant, by not adjourning until the remaining witnesses on the charge before them had been heard. The evidence of Captain Symes was strongly in favour of Mr. Hastings, and so clear, that Mr. Burke only observed that he should not lessen, by any cross-questioning, the unexpected blessing of Providence to Mr. Hastings of this gentleman's return.

Resignation of
Lord
Thurlow.

During the recess, Lord Thurlow's resignation took place; and they who felt an interest for Mr. Hastings, were apprehensive that this event might be prejudicial to his cause*; but for this fear there was no adequate foundation. Whoever might be Lord Chancellor, there could be no doubt that on so great and solemn an occasion, he would conduct himself as became a man under the observation of an enlightened age, and answerable in his fame to all posterity. In fact, the Lords had shewn, during this long trial, a spirit and temper worthy of the highest eulogy; while they never participated in the fury which sometimes animated the managers, with equal caution they abstained from all attempts to control or interrupt their proceedings; avoiding every thing which could tend to produce a collision, or form the foundation of a complaint.

1793.
Feb. 15-19.
Mr. Law
opens the
defence on
the Begum
charge.

In the beginning of the ensuing session, Mr. Law opened the defence on the Begum charge. "It was impossible," the compiler of the history of this trial observes, "to view the court without strong sentiments of regret, for the havock which time had made amongst the members since this Begum article was

* Wilkes's Letters to his Daughter. Longman Vol. iv. p. 117.

“ opened in 1788. At that period one hundred and eight-six peers were present; on this day, from twenty-two to twenty-eight; one hundred and twenty-one changes in the peerage, since the year 1788, having taken place*.”

Mr. Law, referring to an elementary proposition in the law of nations, that the violation of amity and good faith on the one hand, liberates the other party to a treaty from all obligation, said, the question would be whether the English did observe with good faith their treaty, until the Begum, by her acts of hostility, warranted the abandonment of the Company's guarantee. If she was so guilty, there would be little difficulty in shewing that her punishment was most lenient. She was not replaced in her original undefended situation, but under our protection. He shewed that the Begum had no right whatever to the treasures that had been taken; an investigation which became material, because the managers had insisted on the title as inherent in her, while, in fact, it was only derived from the treaty of guarantee in 1765, on her violation of which all her rights terminated. When succours were demanded from Cheyt Sing, and while he hesitated, the Begum encouraged him to resistance, and promised aid, both in troops and treasures; a promise which afterward she omitted no effort to perform. He shewed our dominion in that part of the globe tottering on the very brink of a precipice, the mischievous and public endeavours of the Begum and her avowed agents to overthrow it entirely; facts which were proved by the letters and other evidence produced on the part of the prosecution.

As no proof applicable to Mr. Hastings had been produced of the horrible cruelties which, in the opening of the charges, had appalled all hearers, the defence was necessarily confined to the facts of cruelty

* History of the Trial, part vi. p. 39. It appears that in six years, during which this trial had been pending, seven dukes, twenty-four earls, four viscounts, and thirteen barons had been removed by death. Of these, the greater part had successors, and some had attained majority during the period, introducing in that division thirty new judges; nine bishops had died and were succeeded by others, eight peers of Scotland had been displaced and others substituted at the election, and fifteen new peers had been created.

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Evidence

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and extortion, to which the real efforts of the managers had been directed, and to these a full and perfect answer was given. The assertion that the Princesses had been reduced to want, almost to famine, was, in like manner, shewn to be void of foundation. Many vehement debates arose as to the admissibility of portions of the documentary evidence produced on the charge; and some acrimonious discussions took place between the managers and the defendant's counsel, particularly Mr. Burke and Mr. Law.

Captain John Gordon and Captain David Williams were produced, to prove the military operations that had taken place when the British troops were assailed and menaced by the forces of Cheyt Sing and of the Begum. These witnesses underwent very rigid, and often uncourteous, cross-examinations. That of Captain Williams, conducted by Mr. Burke and Mr. Sheridan, lasted two days; he was pressed on the contents of an affidavit which he had made twelve years before, and on the execution of the Rajah Mustapha Khan; he might have refused to answer any of these questions, but did not avail himself of his privilege, nor was he ever forsaken by his firmness or temper.

2nd.
Resolution of
the Lords on
the subject.

Cross-examination had now taken a course so irregular and desultory, that the Lords found it necessary to pass a resolution for regulating it in future, particularly disapproving of interruptions and comments, and restraining themselves from interfering until the parties had desisted.

Further evi-
dence.
April 12, 18,
20.

Other witnesses and further documents were produced, to shew that the confinement undergone by the Begums was very slight; that the irons so much talked of were of no greater weight than the gold ornaments they generally wore; that the seizure of their treasures was entirely the act of the Vizier; that their rebellion was matter of general notoriety; that their treatment was neither effected nor instigated by Mr. Hastings, and that it was generally regarded in India as perfectly regular and proper.

Evidence to
Mr. Hastings's
character.

Lieutenant Shulldham, being interrogated as to the character of Mr. Hastings, and the estimation in which

he was held, after it was known to the natives that he was under impeachment, answered, "I do not speak from any personal knowledge of Mr. Hastings, nor from any favours I have received, for none have ever been conferred; I speak of him from the communications of the natives and people of India themselves. As a public character, I do not believe there ever was or ever will be a more able governor; and, as a private character, I do not believe there exists a more benevolent or a better man. This was the universal opinion of both Europeans and natives." Similar testimony was given by the other witnesses.

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Mr. Plumer occupied four days in summing up the evidence on this charge. He recalled to the memory of the court the violent and exaggerated terms in which it had been advanced, the vehement assertions of the cruelty, treachery, and wickedness of Mr. Hastings. Eight years he had been under accusation; unlimited access to every sort of evidence, oral and documentary, had been in the possession of prosecutors of matchless ability and indefatigable industry; and surely, by this time, the true character and conduct of Mr. Hastings, and those whom he was supposed to have oppressed, must be known and ascertained, beyond the reach of prejudice to mistake, or ingenuity or eloquence to misrepresent with success. The accusation resolved itself into two great acts, the resumption of the jaghires, and the seizure of the treasures. In a strong and well-combined analysis, he examined the evidence applicable to each of these points, deducing not less from that which had been produced by the managers, than from that brought forward on the other part, the absence of all foundation for the charge. He adverted, in terms of severe reprehension, to furious expressions of the Begums, in letters which had been produced by the managers, little consorting with the declamations on their mildness, purity, and benevolence, and little warranting the glowing effusions which had been uttered on the subject of maternal love and filial duty. It is not possible, without transcribing the entire speech of Mr. Plumer, to give an adequate notion

April 25, 30.
May 2, 6.
Mr. Plumer's
summing-up.

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of the minuteness, accuracy, and spirit with which he analyzed the whole mass of evidence on both sides. Toward the conclusion, he alluded to a declaration made by one of the managers, that all their witnesses were in the enemy's camp. "Then," he said, "the enemies of Mr. Hastings, after having beat up for volunteers in every quarter, have not yet obtained one solitary recruit; and this is 'the monster of tyranny, oppression, and cruelty, who has ravaged the province of Oude; this is the person whose character exceeds in depravity all the history of human wickedness from the time of original sin; yet in the country where all that wickedness, where all that tyranny and cruelty, took place—after the House of Commons have been engaged in a prosecution against him for so many years; after all, we are told that there is not one man who has been upon the spot; that there is not any body who knows any thing upon the subject, who is not hostile to the charge, and friendly to the accused.'"

May 9, 14, 17,
24.Mr. Dallas
opens the
Defence on
corruption.

Mr. Dallas then opened the defence on the charge of corruption, spread through three articles of the impeachment; but which the managers, for purposes which had, no doubt, appeared wise to them, thought fit to consolidate into one, employing on it two entire sessions of Parliament, during which three honourable managers successively put forth their powers; and seven days, sometimes employed in splendid eloquence, sometimes in argumentative discussion, were found to be necessary on the part of the prosecution to explain to the court the various parts of those different charges.

The sixth article, commonly called the charge of presents, imputed to Mr. Hastings bribery and corruption, committed, in a great number of instances and for a great length of time, in the execution of his public trust.

Those parts of the seventh article on which the managers had proceeded related to certain revenue establishments which Mr. Hastings was charged with having overturned for his own wicked, corrupt, and

oppressive purposes. The fourteenth article related to a bribe said to have been offered by the Nabob to Mr. Hastings, through the means of Mr. Middleton ; and, although it did not allege or even insinuate that such bribe was accepted, his conduct was stated to be criminal.

CHAP.
XCI.

1793.

In a speech of animated eloquence and powerful argumentation, not unminged with polished irony and cutting sarcasm, the learned counsel investigated these charges, shewing how little they were supported by evidence, and stating that by which they would be disproved. The numerous assertions which he had to contradict, the voluminous evidence which it was his duty to investigate, and the adverse deductions which his arguments were calculated to repel, occupied four entire days, in which no moment was wasted on useless dissertation or rhetorical embellishment, but all was close, well defined reasoning, strongly combined and judiciously applied.

Mr. Hastings then shortly addressed the court, offering to compress his evidence and to forego the summing-up of counsel, in order to abridge the proceedings. He made every acknowledgment due to the talents and the zeal, the exertion of which he offered to forego, and to which he was indebted for the confident hope and assurance that, although he might not live to receive the sanction of an acquittal, his name at least would not descend to posterity blasted with infamy, but be recorded with those of the many other victims of false opinion, some of higher worth, none of better intentions, who had done service to the states which employed them, and been requited with unthankfulness and persecution.

Mr. Hastings
offers to
forego sum-
ming-up.

Mr. Burke resented this observation. " When the managers," he said, " shall have made their further remarks on what has been adduced in support of the defendant, it will be for your Lordships to consider the propriety of the terms which any culprit at your bar may apply to the Commons of Great Britain, of ingratitude for services rendered to his country. In the abridgment of evidence or the cur-

Mr. Burke.

CHAP.
XCI.

1793.

25th.
Evidence.

“tailment of reasoning upon it, he must abide the
“consequences of his own election, the Commons dis-
“claiming any wish on the subject.”

Evidence was then adduced to shew, from documents transmitted, that the oaths which Mr. Hastings was supposed to have taken respecting presents had never been administered to him, nor to any governor-general in India for some years before he attained that station.

Mr. Auriol.

Mr. Auriol was produced to prove some facts relative to the same subject; but he was cross-examined by Mr. Burke at so much length, and with such intemperate rigour, that, after many objections had been made by counsel and many observations by the Lord Chancellor and other Peers, the Archbishop of York said, “Upon my word, my lords, this proceeding is
“intolerable; the gentleman is treated at your bar as
“a pickpocket, and not as a gentleman. If Robespierre and Marat were in the managers’ box, they
“could not say any thing more inhuman and more
“against all sentiments of honour and morality than
“what we have been often used to since this trial has
“commenced.”

Observations
of the Arch-
bishop of York.

Perhaps some portion of the strength of these expressions arose from a recollection in the mind of the reverend Prelate of the manner in which his son had been cross-examined, and the use which had been made of a letter confided by him to the right honourable manager. Mr. Burke, who must have been extremely galled by a comparison between himself and the two French leaders of regicide and murder, magnanimously suppressed his feelings. He declared at first that he was not to be supposed to have heard the words of the Archbishop—that he had entirely forgotten them; but in pursuing the subject, he made some bitter observations on the characters of gentlemen and pickpockets.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Hastings’s
supposed
wealth.

As much stress had been laid, in many speeches during the trial, on the immense wealth of Mr. Hastings, supposed to have been much augmented by the speculation he had practised, three witnesses were

called, from whose evidence it appeared that, after filling for thirteen years a post of such great power and influence, Mr. Hastings's fortune amounted to no more than £65,322. This closed the evidence on the sixth article of the impeachment.

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XCI.

1793.

Without any summing-up or introductory speech, evidence was then adduced on the charge relating to contracts. On that which regarded opium, Mr. Plumer proposed to prove, that, until the government of Mr. Hastings, opium was no source of revenue to the Company, but a monopoly in the hands of individuals; that Mr. Hastings took it from them and made it productive to the Company; that in 1775 it was put up to public contract; that in 1777 it was given to Mr. Mackenzie for three years on the same terms; and that in 1780 it was granted to Mr. Mackenzie for one year longer by Mr. Francis, Mr. Wheeler, and Mr. Hastings, the first two being a majority of the board.

25, 27.
Evidence on
Contracts.

On the bullock contract, it was shewn that the supply agreed for was not larger than Sir Eyre Coote had required as indispensable, and that it was not improvidently or extravagantly made. An answer was in like manner given to that portion of the charge which related to the agency of Mr. Belli, which was customary, proper, and sanctioned by Mr. Francis himself.

28th.

When the defendant's counsel proposed to adduce the testimonials to Mr. Hastings's character, which had been received from India so long ago as 1789, Mr. Burke, although he had then proposed not only to admit, but to make them part of his case, intimated an objection to their being received; but, on the recapitulation of those circumstances, withdrew it, and the authenticity of the documents was established by two certificates from Lord Cornwallis. They were from English residents, both civil and military; from natives of every rank and condition, male and female; they all breathed one sentiment of approbation and gratitude toward the Governor-General*.

Testimonials
to character.

* In the printed minutes of the evidence they occupy one hundred and forty-four well-filled folio pages, and are dated from 1783 to 1788.

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XCI.

1793.

Defence
closed.
Mr. Hastings's
address.

With this evidence, the defence was declared to be closed. Mr. Hastings addressed his judges at some length, re-asserting his own innocence, disinterestedness, and zeal for the honour of his country, his earnest endeavours to promote the essential interests of his employers, the happiness and prosperity of the people committed to his charge, and at no time with more devotion of mind and purpose to these objects than during that period in which his accusers had endeavoured to represent him as occupied and engrossed by the base pursuit of low, sordid, and interdicted emolument. On the subject of his fortune, the evidence which had been given was strictly true. In conclusion he said, "In the long period of another year, I may be numbered with those of my noble judges whom I have, with sorrow, seen drop off year after year; and in aggravation of the loss which I have sustained by their death, I may thus lose the judgment of their survivors by my own."

Observations
of Mr. Fox
and Mr. Burke.

Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke remarked on the great freedom which he had taken with the managers; and solemnly denied that they had the least wish for a further protraction of this enormously long trial, or that any part of the delay could fairly be attributed to them.

Further delay.

No further proceeding in the trial took place during the session. On returning to their own chamber, the Peers had resolved to continue the inquiry on Wednesday in the ensuing week, being the ninth day from the time of the resolution. In the House of Commons, the message on this subject was received with great dissatisfaction; a committee appointed to consider the state of the impeachment reported, through Mr. Charles Townsend, that, from a consideration of the defendant's case having been closed sooner than there was reason to expect, and of the time which would be requisite for printing the portion of evidence not yet distributed, as well as for copying out the speeches of counsel, the managers could in no case be sufficiently prepared to begin their reply at the time appointed; it would be necessary to fix a

30th.
Debated in the
House of Com-
mons.

more distant day. The motion was opposed, but carried on a division*.

CHAP.
XCI.

Mr. Burke then moved that the managers should lay before the House a statement of the proceedings, with explanatory observations: Mr. Wigley moved the previous question; the division presenting equal numbers†, the Speaker of course gave his deciding vote in favour of the original proposition; but when that question was put, it was rejected by a majority of four‡.

1793.
Mr. Burke's
motion.

Mr. Grey next moved for a message to the Lords, requesting a postponement of further proceedings until the next session, assigning as a reason that, from the advanced period of the present session, it would be impossible immediately to obtain judgment on the several charges, or even to complete the replies of the managers.

June 6.
Mr. Grey
moves a post-
ponement.

Mr. Ewan Law, member for Westbury and brother of the learned counsel for Mr. Hastings, opposed the motion. Without assigning the delay which had taken place to any particular party, he observed, that if the managers were to proceed during the present session as far as they could, it might accelerate the decision a quarter of a year, a great consideration to Mr. Hastings.

Observations
of Mr. Ewan
Law.

Mr. Dundas attributed the length of the trial to the Lords: they met at too late an hour, adjourned for too long a period, and had been too scrupulous about the attendance of the judges. Had not their lordships legal ability enough within the walls of their own chamber? Had they not Lord Thurlow, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Lord Bathurst, and a noble Earl (Stanhope), who had undertaken to teach law even to the law lords themselves? The motion was lost on a division§.

Motion lost.

On the next day, Mr. Grey said, that, considering what he owed to himself, and feeling unable to proceed on the trial at the day appointed, he must desire the House to dismiss him, or to give directions by

7th.
Mr. Grey.

* 87 to 42.

† 69 each.

‡ 71 to 67.

§ 66 to 61.

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XCI.

1792.

Mr. Burke.

which he might be enabled to act in the discharge of a task to which he was not at present competent.

Mr. Burke vehemently observed that a great deal which had been urged on the ground of compassion to the accused arose from a flimsy, prevaricating, petty, peevish morality, incompatible with the dignity of public justice. It had been attempted to convert the subject of this trial into one of mirth, as well as a theme of compassion for the accused. Never was any thing so dull as insipid mirth, nor so immoral as perverted morality. These appeals were made in favour of a man who feared he should be a beggar, when for fourteen years he had enjoyed, in salaries and emoluments, forty thousand pounds a-year; a man who had caused two unfortunate women to be robbed of a million of money.

He is called to order.

Here he was called to order by Mr. Rolle; and the Speaker requested him to abstain from observations on the general question.

9th.
Delay carried.
10th.

Mr. Dundas moved a message requesting further time, which was carried on a division*; and the Lords agreed to proceed on the second Tuesday in the next session.

12th.
Mr. Whitbread's motion against a newspaper.

Mr. Whitbread next invited the attention of the House to a newspaper called "The World," in which the observations made by the Archbishop of York were detailed, with some reflections of the editor; and proposed an address, praying that the Attorney-General might be directed to prosecute the printer, and for an inquiry, in form, whether the words alluded to had been uttered, when, where, and by whom? but, on the suggestion of the Speaker, and reference to a precedent, this motion was reduced to an assertion that the paragraphs contained scandalous and libellous matter, reflecting on the members who had conducted the impeachment.

Mr. Francis.

In seconding the motion, Mr. Francis made some observations on Mr. Burke, which it would be difficult to describe with exactness as ironical or serious. "It

* 82 to 46.

“ is the well-known character of my right honourable friend,” he said, “ that, in whatever he undertakes, he does nothing by halves, but every thing with force and vehemence. Right or wrong, he is always in earnest. Quodcunque vult, valde vult. There is in him nothing like double-dealing, hypocrisy, or prevarication. Whenever he takes part, you always know the worst or the best of him. On one particular subject, we all remember with what zeal and ardour he declared himself. Never, never, since ranks and gradations have existed in society, has there appeared an advocate so able, a champion so determined, in the cause of the upper orders in our constitution. If ever there was an ardent and useful defender of nobility, of prelacy, of hierarchy, it is he. Now mark the return he receives. A right reverend prelate, a pious archbishop, a judge in the seat of judgment, a spiritual lord of Parliament, in the face of Europe and of the world, compares my right honourable friend to two of the most abandoned and desperate ruffians that ever disgraced the cause of democracy—to Marat and Robespierre; and declares that my right honourable friend is no better than either of them. He was a wise man who said, ‘ Put not your trust in princes.’ But, after this astonishing example, I think that man must be infatuated, must be a fool indeed, who shall hereafter put his trust in bishops.”

Mr. Dundas justly complimented Mr. Burke on his behaviour when these unhandsome expressions were uttered; his conduct was very noble; he had put on, as it were, a deafness which formed an admirable contrast with the intemperance of the other party. But, upon a general consideration of the question, he moved an adjournment.

Mr. Burke said, that, after what had passed on the trial of Stockdale, he never would consent to order a similar prosecution. The House was constitutionally empowered to punish by attachment every breach of its own privileges, and ought never to surrender or delegate that power to any court whatever. He heard

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XCI.

1793.

with pleasure the approbation of his forbearance. He hoped he should always be able to practise that virtue when he alone was concerned; but when injuries had been sustained by others, when he had to plead the cause of oppressed millions, he should give full scope to passions and resentments which belong to prosecutors of wrongs done to the public: they were held in trust for great public purposes. Against the right reverend prelate he had not the least personal resentment; on the contrary, he could find excuses for him in his age, and its general concomitant, impatience. The adjournment was carried*.

Adjournment.

1794.

Feb. 13.

Return of the
Marquis
Cornwallis.
He is proposed
as a witness.

Mr. Larkins
also.

25th.

Arrangement.

During the recess, the Marquis Cornwallis returned from India; and the defendant's counsel proposed, although their case was closed, to call him as a witness, for the purpose of putting a few questions. Mr. Grey, while he insisted that the defendant had no right to such a course of proceeding, said the managers would raise no objection; and as Mr. Larkins, who had often been mentioned in Mr. Hastings's defence, was also arrived, the managers would examine him.

Proceedings having been delayed several days, on account of the noble Marquis's indisposition, Mr. Law, on the part of his client, waived the benefit of his testimony. Mr. Grey said, that if, at any time before the evidence in reply was finished, the Marquis could be examined, the managers would admit it; and he offered to the counsel the opportunity of examining Mr. Larkins. Mr. Law declared that he neither asked nor received the power of calling Lord Cornwallis as a favour; it was a right, and he maintained it on the precedents of Lord Wintoun and Lord Lovat; but, as the health of the witness was precarious, and he was most anxious to avoid delay, he would not adduce any further evidence.

Mr. Francis
as witness.

After some minutes of consultations in Bengal had been read, and many objections vehemently argued, Mr. Francis was called, and required to state what had occurred in the debate, before the resolutions were passed for demanding from Cheyt Sing supplies and

succours, to which he had agreed. To this question an objection was taken, and, the attempt being new modelled, and reproduced in various forms, long and not very placid arguments consumed the day.

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XCI.

1794.

At the next sitting, the Lord Chancellor declared the judgment of the House in favour of the objection. A considerable portion of time was exhausted in discussing this decision; and the next question proposed to the witness appearing equally objectionable, another long and vehement debate, or rather series of discourses, by the managers, consumed the residue of this day. The defendant's counsel took no part; for, when called upon by the Lord Chancellor, Mr. Law said it would be a wilful and inexcusable breach of duty to their client, if they wasted one moment in sustaining a judgment so recently given. On this point, too, the decision of the Lords was adverse to the managers, who expressed a sullen submission, but protested that they did not acquiesce. Mr. Francis was called no more. Documentary evidence to a great extent was read, and objections perseveringly advanced and discussed. In treating on one of them, Mr. Burke said he could not help observing on the prostituted audacity of the criminal at the bar. This expression was animadverted on, not by Mr. Law alone, but by the Marquis Townsend: the manager, however, maintained its propriety. The paper proposed to be read was a vote of censure pronounced on Mr. Hastings by the East India Company without his knowledge, and without a hearing.

27th.

March 1.

Altercations.

Mr. Hastings, after observing that it had been so passed, proceeded—"When the whole system of his government had been completely investigated on his return to England, that court approved, and gave him their unanimous thanks—an approbation sufficient, he had hoped, both in the eye of law and reason, effectually to obliterate the censure. It was therefore a species of unparalleled cruelty to bring it forward at that period; and he relied on the humanity, honour, and justice of the court not to suffer this minute of censure to be read; it being passed

Mr. Hastings.

CHAP.
XCI.

“ at a moment of intemperate heat and agitation, and
“ utterly extinguished by a subsequent resolution.”

1794.
Mr. Burke.

Mr. Burke contended that the paper was proper to be received ; because it was an answer to a letter which the prisoner had dared to write to the Directors, his masters, and to print and publish in Calcutta.

Mr. Hastings.

Mr. Hastings instantly said, “ My Lords, I affirm
“ that the assertion which your Lordships have just
“ heard is false. I knew my duty too well to print
“ and publish any letter in Calcutta which I wrote to
“ the Court of Directors. That assertion is a libel ;
“ it is of a piece with every thing that I have heard
“ uttered, since the commencement of this trial, by
“ that authorised, licensed”—(and, after a long pause,
he added, turning to Mr. Burke) “ manager.”

Further delay.

By these delays, all reasonable hope of terminating the trial in the present session must have vanished. The decision of the Lords, that the proposed evidence was inadmissible, was not pronounced until the judges had finished their circuits ; and then the evidence in reply to all the articles, except the first, and the summing-up of the managers, were yet to be given.

April 7.

9th.
Evidence of
the Marquis
Cornwallis.

The Marquis Cornwallis, being at length examined, proved that, while the present accusation was pending in the House of Commons, he left England, arrived in India about eighteen months after Mr. Hastings's departure, and remained seven years. In 1787, he went up the Ganges to the very extremity of the provinces over which Mr. Hastings had presided. The accusation against him was matter of notoriety ; and although any person aggrieved might have made complaint, not one was ever preferred ; and Mr. Hastings was much esteemed and respected by the native inhabitants in general. His Lordship also gave evidence on the state and situation of the Zemindars, and the known hostility of the Begums to the British government, and denied that they were, or ever had been, reduced to any pecuniary distress, or that the British name had been tarnished by the treatment they had received. He added, that the inhabitants of the provinces subjected to England enjoyed a much greater

degree of happiness, protection, and security, than those under the dominion of the native princes.

CHAP.
XCI.

Mr. Burke and Mr. Grey cross-examined this witness on expressions he had used in his dispatches in 1788 and 1789, describing the miserable state of some of the provinces, and on the opinions of Mr. Kirkpatrick on the same subject. The facts were admitted ; but it was explained that the cause of distress was the injudicious mode of collecting the revenue, which Mr. Hastings had no power to reform, the authority not having been given until 1786.

1794.
Cross-
examined.

In answer to questions from the Peers, the Marquis declared that it required great firmness and presence of mind to put an end to the confederacy of native princes ; and that, in accomplishing that object, Mr. Hastings rendered very acceptable service to the country.

Mr. William Larkins was next produced by the managers. He had been, during twenty years, accountant-general to the East India Company in Bengal, and employed by Mr. Hastings to keep certain accounts relative to his private transactions. The examination of this gentleman occupied four days ; no inconsiderable portion of which was exhausted in discussions on points of law. It related entirely to matters of account ; and endeavours, altogether ineffectual, were made to obtain evidence to the disadvantage of the defendant, or to discredit the witness by those who had called him. On one occasion, he was asked by Mr. Burke whether he had retained copies of certain private books of Mr. Hastings, the originals of which had been given up. His answer was direct, satisfactory, and spirited. He first explained an error into which he had fallen, through a misapprehension of the extent of a question, and he added, " I have no copies of Mr. Hastings's " books ; and I should think myself a base man, if I " had endeavoured to retain copies of the private trans- " actions of another individual, who had reposed con- " fidence in me." He was not at all indebted to Mr. Hastings for his appointment, having attained it by mere seniority in office, and was retained by the Mar-

9, 14, 16, 28.
Mr. Larkins.

Cross-examin-
ation of Mr.
Larkins.

CHAP.
XCI.

1794.

29th.
Proceedings
on Nobkissen's
bill in Chan-
cery.Not admitted
in evidence.May 5
Mr. Burke
proposes to
inquire into
the Mahratta
war.

6th.

Anger of
Mr. Burke.

quis Cornwallis. He gave Mr. Hastings the highest character for integrity, disinterestedness, and benevolence.

Mr. Burke, after some severe observations on this testimony, and considerable altercation with counsel, produced Mr. Strachan, to prove a bill in Chancery, filed by the Rajah Nobkissen, against Mr. Hastings, and his plea to it, the bill having been exhibited in June 1792, the fifth year of the present trial, and the pleas in February 1793. This evidence was objected to, and, after argument, Lord Kenyon sitting for the Lord Chancellor, declared inadmissible.

Mr. Burke then proposed to give evidence of the causes, conduct, and conclusion of the Mahratta war; in which, he alleged, Mr. Hastings carried on all the negotiations with a perfidy unexampled in history, and which he concluded with a peace of unprecedented ignominy.

In answer to a question from Lord Kenyon, he admitted that the evidence was not applicable to any part of the charge; it was a reply to evidence given by the defendant: but, on the clearest principles, it was rejected by the whole House. Had they decided otherwise, it is impossible to divine the length to which the trial would have been protracted; for the matter extended over a period of eight years, and the evidence relating to it filled six folio volumes*.

This determination irritated Mr. Burke to the highest pitch. He complained bitterly of the prejudice which prevailed against the managers, of the imputation of delay so repeatedly cast on them; of the freedom used by counsel in discussing their proceedings; of the conduct of individual peers, in interrupting their remarks; of the libels published against them in the daily prints; and, in support of this complaint, he read a passage in a newspaper called "The Oracle." In vain did Lord Kenyon and several other peers intreat him to address himself to the business; in vain did Lord Thurlow inform him that they could not investigate a complaint of a libel; he persevered in de-

* History of the Trial, part vii. p. 107.

fiance of all remonstrance, and finally tendered a written protest, desiring it might be entered on the Journals; but Lord Kenyon declared that it could not be received.

CHAP.
XCI.

1794.

Mr. Fox then produced some evidence concerning the advance of money by the native powers; and Mr. Taylor on the smuggling of opium, the bullocks, and the agencies. An attempt was made to introduce evidence of the conduct of Debi Sing, as reported by Mr. Patterson; but it was now, as it had been so long before, rejected; and the managers declared they had nothing further to adduce.

Further
evidence
produced by
the managers.

Mr. Grey then replied on the first, or Benares charge. A great portion of his speech was devoted to a vindication of Mr. Francis, eulogies on his consistency, and regrets that he had not been permitted to afford his aid as a manager, or to give his testimony at the bar.

8th.—12th.
Mr. Grey
sums up the
Benares
charge.

Mr. Sheridan occupied only one day in replying on the Begum charge. He said he had read attentively every word of the speeches of the learned counsel; compared them with every part of their evidence, and would fairly own, that what had puzzled and embarrassed him was, to discover any one point which they had so pressed as to make it necessary, without disrespect to their lordships' sagacity and discernment, to attempt reply or refutation. In his observations on the speeches of counsel, the honourable manager animadverted, with pointed derision, on some of their metaphors and some of their narratives; and in this he succeeded in the degree that might be expected from his known character; wit and fancy sparkled through every period.

14th.
Mr. Sheridan
sums up the
Begum
charge.

Mr. Fox replied on the sixth, seventh, and fourteenth articles, which related to presents; he reviewed the evidence for the prosecution, the arguments used in the defence, and the proofs adduced in support of it, with great regularity and cogent argumentation.

20th, 21st.
Mr. Fox that
on presents.

On the dull and uninteresting subject of contracts, Mr. Taylor was engaged two days; but neither the matter nor the manner of treating it afforded ground for observation.

23rd, 27th.
Mr. Taylor
sums up on
contracts.

CHAP.
XCI.

1794.

Altered
behaviour
towards Mr.
Hastings.
Mr. Fox.

In all these speeches, Mr. Hastings had no reason to complain that his feelings were wantonly wounded, or his person illiberally attacked. On the contrary, when Mr. Fox had intimated a wish for an adjournment, on account of illness, and Mr. Hastings, disputing his sincerity, said, that at a time when he had been reported to be ill in bed, too hoarse to speak, he had been seen riding in the burning sun, and talking in a tone perfectly audible, Mr. Fox, with his characteristic amenity, gave only such an answer as would justify himself, without wounding the defendant, calling him, for the first time such an expression had been applied during the trial, the gentleman at the bar.

Observations
of Mr. Burke.

This mild and manly tone of conduct was not satisfactory to Mr. Burke. "These complaints," he exclaimed, "have so often come before your lordships from this criminal, that I think it necessary to say a few words. We made no complaint when, at his desire, your lordships chose to adjourn for ten days to receive the evidence of a noble lord, who was not in India during his government, and who could not speak to any one circumstance of his transactions; we did not deny him that time, although he now presumes to accuse us of ill designs upon the allegation of an existing illness. He says his case is harder than ours; your lordships know, whatever is the length of the chain, we have the other end of it; but there is this difference, that we have not got ninety thousand pounds of the Rajah Nobkissen's money in our pockets to console us—let him answer to that."

Mr. Burke's
general reply.
May 28, 30.
June 3, 5, 7,
11, 12, 14, 16.

Mr. Burke then commenced his general reply, which occupied nine days, and the printed copy of it fills two octavo volumes, or one-eighth part of the whole of the edition of his works, completed by his executors. In it he revised, collected, and arranged with great exactness, the evidence and the arguments. In making a few extracts, it is not intended to follow or even to describe the course of this oration, but merely to present some passages which indicate the peculiar manner in which he treated the defendant and his sub-

ject in general. The matter, he observed, resolved itself into four heads. His demeanor in his defence, the principles of his defence, the means of his defence, and the testimonies adduced to fortify those means, support those principles, and justify that demeanor.

Applying himself first to the demeanor of the defendant, Mr. Burke observes, "I will venture to say, who have examined long and compared carefully all the conduct of prisoners before this high tribunal, from the impeachment of the Duke of Suffolk to that of Lord Macclesfield, from persons of dignity, such as Lord Bacon, the Earl of Macclesfield, and the Duke of Suffolk, to the smugglers in the reign of King William, and I will venture to say that, through that whole line of parliamentary proceeding, any thing similar to the demeanor of the prisoner was never seen. What could have encouraged him to that demeanor, your lordships, when you begin seriously to reflect on this matter, will consider*."

He treated the complaints, made by Mr. Hastings and his friends, of the harsh expressions which had been used, as a recrimination on the managers, and, in vindicating, most abundantly and energetically repeated them. "After describing the magnitude of the criminal, we have stated him not to be only a public robber himself, but that he was at the head of a system of robbery; that he was the captain-general of the gang, under whom the whole was arrayed, disciplined and paid, and that is what we offered to prove, what in part we have proved; and, in a direct criminal charge, describing a criminal of great magnitude, we do not abate in the least, as we know of no compromises with vice.

* If this passage is compared with the printed speech (Burke's Works, vol. xv. p. 11), it will be found to differ very materially. In fact, in comparing the printed speech with that taken by the short-hand writer, I find the variances frequent and important, and have, therefore, generally quoted from the manuscript. I am not to be informed that any one who reads over a speech made by himself, in the notes of a short-hand writer, will find that he has many errors to correct, both in grammar and rhetoric; but Mr. Burke's corrections go beyond these bounds; long passages are suppressed, others inserted, and paragraphs are often so inverted, that their sense is entirely changed. I have, therefore, generally followed the manuscript, as the truest representation of that which was really addressed to the judges.

CHAP.
XCI.

1794.

“ Whenever we describe a man who has abused his power by violence and wrong, we call the thing tyranny, and the man a tyrant; when a man takes by violence money that does not belong to him, we call it a robbery and the man a robber; when he takes money clandestinely that does not belong to him, we call the thing a theft and him a thief; when a man by forged papers takes money that does not belong to him, we call it a forgery; when a man produces false papers, to charge his employers with money which he converts to his own account, we call it a breach of trust. When a man promises a great native of the country his bond for a sum of money, and when he receives the money, refuses to give his bond, but uses his power to justify his wrong, then we call him a cheat, a sharper, and a swindler. We have used these names, and we are sorry that the English language does not afford us adequate terms to convey our horror and indignation at the greatness, the multitude, and the enormity of his crimes.

“ We do think this process is too long; we lament it in every sense; but we lament that the Begums have been so long without seeing a just punishment inflicted; that Cheyt Sing has been so long a wanderer, while the man who has driven him from his dominions is unpunished; we are sorry that Nobkissen is so long as fourteen years cheated out of his money—these are our sympathies.”

In another part of his speech, he exclaimed, “ Good God! that all India should have been given in slavery to that man! Say his advocates, we will shew you that Ghingis Khan, Kouli Khan, and Tamerlane destroyed more people in battle ten thousand times than this man did—Good God! have they run mad, have they lost their senses in their guilt; did they ever expect that we meant to compare this man to Tamerlane, Ghingis Khan, or Kouli Khan? Good God! to compare a clerk at a bureau, to compare a fraudulent bullock contractor—for his first elements we could shew were in carrying on fraudulent bullock transactions; to compare him with the con-

“ querors of the world; we never said he was a tiger
 “ and a lion; no, we have said he was a weasel and a
 “ rat! Do we not see, respecting Pharoah, that God,
 “ to humble his pride and presumption, and bring him
 “ to shame, did not do it with tigers and lions, but he
 “ sent lice, locusts, and frogs; every thing that was
 “ low and contemptible, to pollute and destroy the
 “ country; a worse scourge than all the Tamerlanes,
 “ all the tigers and lions in the world. We have not
 “ accused Mr. Hastings of being a great general, and
 “ abusing his powers; we know he is nothing, at the
 “ best, but a creature of the bureau, a bullock con-
 “ tractor, who defrauded, and taught others to defraud,
 “ in that capacity.”

The passage which describes Mr. Hastings as a person of obscure origin and low extraction, having been uttered on the first day of the reply, his friends, consulting well-known and popular works on county history, and making searches at the Herald's college, easily discovered that he was descended of an ancient and honourable family, coeval with, or probably anterior to, the conquest, and that an estate at Daylnesford, in Worcestershire, had descended to his relatives through ancestors who were traced back to the thirteenth century*. When apprized of these facts, in the eighth day of his reply, far from retracting or mitigating any of his expressions, Mr. Burke said, “ I was
 “ a good deal surprised when a friend of mine, yester-
 “ day morning, put into my hands, when I was attack-
 “ ing Mr. Hastings's life and conduct, a pedigree.
 “ I thought to examine into the records of the Com-
 “ pany; they answer by sending me to the Herald's
 “ office. Your lordships' pedigrees are very obscure,
 “ most of them, in comparison of it; I only wonder
 “ how he came to derogate from such a body of nobles,
 “ by becoming a contractor for bullocks.”

These extracts, and their number might be much enlarged, do not comprise the general character of the speech, but serve only to exhibit the furious vehemence of the orator; a quality which gave it the ap-

* History of the Trial, part vii. p. 140.

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1794.

pearance of personality and rancour, and diminished in all minds, in some totally destroyed, the effect which was intended to be produced; though, if the whole speech is perused, it will be considered as a prodigy of arrangement, combination, and investigation; containing axioms of profound wisdom, observations of refined and liberal policy, and powerful appeals to the best principles of human understanding, and the best feelings of the human heart.

March 6, 17.

Committee
to inspect
Journals.

30th April.
Report
prepared by
Mr. Burke.

Before the trial had proceeded to this length, the House of Commons had constituted the managers a committee to inspect the Journals of the Lords, and also to report the matters which, since the commencement of the prosecution, had contributed to its duration, with their observations. The report, after much consideration and several alterations, was finally presented to the House by its author, Mr. Burke. It was of considerable length, and carefully divided and digested. It is justly celebrated as a masterly, although certainly not a faultless, performance. On the duration of the proceeding, it was observed that, up to the first day of March in the current year, one hundred and eighteen days had been consumed, of which seventy had been employed by the managers in opening speeches, summing up, and evidence; and forty-five by the defendant. The duration of the trial was attributed to objections taken by the prisoner's counsel to the admissibility of several documents and persons offered as evidence. These objections amounted to sixty-two: they gave rise to several debates, and to twelve references from the court to the judges. On the part of the managers, the number of objections was small; the debates upon them short: there was not any reference to the judges; and the Lords did not even once retire to the chamber of Parliament.

The report omits to state how many of the objections taken by the defendant's counsel were allowed to be valid; or how much time was used by the managers in arguing at length objections stated in terms very short, and in re-arguing them after they had been decided. If the report had been postponed until

the close of the proceedings, it would have appeared that since the first of March a portion only of one day had been exhausted by the defendant in examining the Marquis Cornwallis; while four and a half had been devoted to the examination of evidence in reply; two in arguing the question of investigating the causes and progress of the Mahratta war, and sixteen days in replies by the managers, while Mr. Hastings's counsel had renounced any such right on their part.

On the subject of evidence, much diffuse and laborious investigation was employed. Its general aim was to prove that a person impeached by the House of Commons was to be tried upon a system and by rules unknown in any other form of proceeding; and in examining the law as it had been established in the ordinary courts, the mode of evidence in matters of contract was blended with that resorted to in cases of crime, and anomalies and exceptions arising out of the complications of human affairs, or the necessity induced by particular circumstances in civil cases, were amplified into general rules. On the principles laid down by Mr. Burke on the subject of evidence, from his opening speech to his final report, it is merely just to say that they are equalled only by those established in the revolutionary tribunal, and in the speech of Robespierre when he proposed to confirm and extend the powers of that court*.

This report, having been printed for the use of members, was immediately published in the form of a pamphlet. As it contained very severe comments on decisions and on those who had made them, Lord Thurlow took occasion, in the course of a debate on another subject, to mention a pamphlet published by one Debrett, reflecting on the judges and many members of that house; it was disgraceful and indecent, and such as he thought ought never to pass unpunished. When it was stated to the ignorant and the wicked that these judges and magistrates were ignorant and corrupt, it tended to lessen respect for and obedience to the laws of the country, because men

Attacked by
Lord Thurlow.

May 22.

* Vol. v. p. 660.

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XCI.

 1791.
23rd.
Answer of
Mr. Burke.

were taught to think ill of those who administered them. Mr. Burke on the following day called the attention of the House of Commons to this speech; and at considerable length vindicated the report, denied that it was calumnious, although it expressed great dissatisfaction at the decisions of the judges, and fearlessly avowed the part he had taken in composing and printing it. Neither the speech of the noble lord or of the right honourable manager produced a word in animadversion or approbation*.

Mr. Pitt moves
a vote of
thanks to the
managers.
June 20.
Mr. Sumner
opposes.

At this period, Mr. Pitt, conceiving that it was in conformity with the uniform practice of the House, moved a vote of thanks to the managers for their faithful discharge of their duty. Mr. Sumner moved the previous question, dwelling principally on the vehement obloquy employed by Mr. Burke, not only against Mr. Hastings, but against all his coadjutors and friends. Of these terms and phrases he made an ample and forcible selection, and asked whether the House of Commons was prepared to adopt at once the extravagant and indecorous substitution of the slang of Billingsgate for the strong, energetic language of truth and justice?

Mr. Ewan
Law.

Mr. Ewan Law amplified the observations, introducing many additional extracts, and made some remarks of great force and severity. Mr. Burke, he said, had lately described Mr. Hastings as a man of low, vulgar, and obscure origin, whose occupations had been base, mean, and sordid. If it were of any consequence, in this free country and at this period, for a man to value himself on such an accidental circumstance, Mr. Hastings had as fair grounds to boast of his family as any gentleman in the house. Such topics were ridiculous; but that from such a man as the manager a word should be uttered on the subject of low, mean, and obscure origin, was indeed most extraordinary; the manager, of all men living, ought to have avoided such a topic. Mr. Hastings, the manager said, had been a fraudulent bullock-contractor

* On the subject of this report and the author's opinion of its merit, see Prior's Life of Burke, vol. ii. page 250.

in 1761. This was downright calumny. Where was the charge voted by the House, or where the evidence that entitled him to make such an assertion? Indeed, the manager, in his closing speech of nine days, wasted five of them upon points that had not the most distant relation to the cause; and the more he considered his conduct, the more was he convinced that from 1788 to this day he had systematically, for some purpose or other, delayed the close of the trial to the latest possible period, to the abuse of public justice, at a most enormous expense to the nation, and to the manifest inconvenience of all ranks of people.

All the remarks made by the opponents of the vote were levelled at Mr. Burke alone; and no member spoke in vindication of him who was not a manager, except Mr. Francis. The observations which were made did not go to the extent of justifying entirely the phrases which had been used, but were principally confined to assertions that the passages selected without their context did not truly represent the meaning of the speaker, and were, if not altogether false, much exaggerated. The house was thinly attended; but, on two divisions, an amendment by Mr. Sumner was, in effect, rejected*, and Mr. Pitt's motion carried†.

The Speaker performed his duty in a manner which Mr. Burke acknowledged to be dignified and elegant, uniting with a due regard to the grandeur and dignity of the House, the utmost politeness and attention to the managers.

One more session was yet to be employed before this protracted process could reach its close.

Soon after the meeting of Parliament, a committee of the House of Lords was appointed to inspect the Journals and report on the mode of giving judgment. The report contained so little useful information, that, on the motion of Lord Thurlow, supported by the Lord Chancellor, it was referred to a committee of the whole House.

In this form of sitting, the Peers proceeded, dur-

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XCI.

1794.

Observation of
Mr. Francis.

Vote of thanks
carried.

Communicated
by the Speaker.

1795.

January 13.
Select Com-
mittee of the
Lords.
February 26.
Report.

March 3, 5, 6,
9, 10, 13, 16, 17,
20, 22, 23.

* 55 to 21.

† 50 to 21.

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XCI.

1796.

Committee of
the whole
House.The Marquis
of Lansdowne.

ing several days, methodically to consider each charge severally. Lord Thurlow took the principal share in the discussion; and his arguments were uniformly in favour of the accused. The Earl of Moira argued on the same part, and so in general did the Earl of Mansfield, Lord Walsingham, the Bishop of Rochester, and several other Peers, particularly the Marquis of Lansdowne, whose observations were peculiarly statesmanlike and masterly. He analyzed the charges and the evidence, and placed the conduct of Mr. Hastings in a proper light. The great and indeed only questions in the case, he said, ought to be these: Had he governed India to the satisfaction of the people? and had he improved the interest which his native country had in those distant possessions? These would have been the only questions which the late King of Prussia, the greatest and wisest man of the age, would have asked, had he possessed so rich a dominion and so meritorious a servant. Satisfied with the beneficial result of so long an administration, he would not have descended to inquire into the minutiae of his government—to be laboriously employed in tracing out every peccadillo, every mistake arising from error of judgment; he would not have been trying his Governor for years together after his return home, in order to discover some pitiful drawback from services the most meritorious and useful. He would have acknowledged that Mr. Hastings had made a beneficial use of the absolute power lodged in his hands; and he was convinced in his conscience that he ought to be acquitted of every part of the charge.

On the adverse side were the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Norfolk, and the Earl of Caernarvon. It was intimated by the latter Peer that those members who had not attended the trial could not vote in the final decision; but it was answered that the right to pronounce a verdict could not be doubted; a sense of propriety might induce some noble Lords to abstain, but every individual must decide for himself. In these debates, the forms were stated in which the several questions arising from the charges were to be

proposed for decision, and their number was sixteen ; several of the charges, especially those on presents and contracts, giving rise to distinct and separate propositions of culpability.

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XCI.

1795.

Whether it proceeded from the opinions which had been expressed on the impropriety of voting by certain Peers, or from what other reason, the decision of this great cause devolved on a portion of the peerage never exceeding twenty-nine in number, and sometimes descending to twenty-four. On the first question, the decision was guilty, six ; not guilty, twenty-three. On the other questions, the proportion in favour of the defendant was equally great ; and on two his acquittal was unanimous. The Earl of Caernarvon pronounced condemnation on all the points except two ; the Earl of Radnor on six, but the contrary on the residue ; Earl Fitzwilliam, guilty on all but two ; the Earl of Suffolk, guilty on three, not guilty on one, and on the residue he abstained from voting ; the Earl of Mansfield said guilty on one charge, on the residue not guilty ; the Earl of Walsingham, guilty on one, not guilty on the others ; the Duke of Norfolk said, guilty on the first two questions, and voted no more ; and the Lord Chancellor said, guilty on all the questions except three, and in these he concurred with the majority.

April 23.
Votes on the
several arti-
cles.

Mr. Hastings was then informed of his acquittal, and discharged, and the Court was dissolved*.

Mr. Hastings
acquitted.

Such was the termination of this unparalleled prosecution ; a termination which few saw with surprise, and still fewer with regret. It had long been regarded as a pompous drama, in which vehement declamation was supported by little action ; in which

Observations.

* It is remarkable that of the proceedings of the Lords in this session not a trace is to be found in the collection of the debates called the Parliamentary History. I have derived the particulars from a quarto volume, published by Debrett in 1797, intitled, " Debates of the House of Lords, &c. on the Evidence delivered on the Trial of Warren Hastings, Proceedings of the East India Company, and Testimonials of the Inhabitants of India," and from the History of the Trial, part 8. There is, in Mr. Mill's History of India, vol. v. c. 2, an account of these proceedings, in which the reader will find a view of the case widely different from that which I have taken.

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XCI.

1795.

men seemed to wield thunder, merely to astonish with its noise. "In the trial of Hastings," a well-known political writer has observed, "eloquence has been employed, like water in an inundation, without judgment and without advantage*." In fact, the strain of oratory which was used, however beautiful and impressive, was produced by a consummate want of judgment and utter deficiency of foresight into probable events, with an absolute inability to adapt the effort to the occasion. Had Mr. Hastings been already found guilty, and the duty of the orators been only that of exciting in the court a disposition to perform, and in the public a feeling to admire, a high act of vindictive justice, the speeches would have been differently considered; the vehemence which distinguished them could not have been imputed to an improper feeling; and, if some passages were censured for excess, great allowances would have been made for the excitement produced in virtuous minds by demonstrated delinquency and recorded guilt. But when charges in which the deepest interest must be felt, supported by circumstances from the mention of which human nature recoils, were advanced in the opening of a case, the managers laid themselves under a severe and alarming responsibility; if they did not prove in general all they advanced, they threw discredit on their cause and injured it by their own exaggerated labour. They must have known, for some of them followed the profession of the law, and they could have been aided by the advice of expert and active practitioners, what proportion the evidence they could adduce might be expected to bear to the charges; and yet the diffusive expanse and stupendous elevation of their speeches were injudiciously disproportioned to the facts they even endeavoured to substantiate.

1794.
June 26.
Mr. Burke
retires from
Parliament.

On the day after he had received the thanks of the House, Mr. Burke, by accepting a nominal office under the Crown, vacated his seat, and for ever retired from an assembly which, during thirty years, he had en-

* David Williams. Letters to a Young Prince from an Old Statesman, p. 8.

lightened and adorned. On his extravagant vehemence during the trial of Mr. Hastings, so many animadversions have been made, that it is not necessary to revert to the subject. It appears that, supported by precedents, not always drawn from the happiest periods of our history, he imagined that an accusation by the House of Commons was equivalent to a condemnation of the offender; that the manager of an impeachment was not to be restrained by the rules which legal wisdom had fixed for the protection of persons accused, and for the pure and equal administration of justice; nor even by those which, for the preservation of decency in our social intercourse, the laws of society have imposed.

Yet, to whatever censures Mr. Burke's asperity and vehemence may have exposed him, the virtuous principle by which he was impelled never could be doubted. He entered on the inquiry with a full conviction of the Governor-general's guilt, and a sense of the imperative duty by which he was called to devote many of the most valuable years of his life to the investigation. From his accurate knowledge and methodical arrangement, all the light which glowed in the speeches of the other members was derived. In the progress of the trial, nothing was so minute as to escape his observation. Even on the delay in paying the bill of Mr. Troward, the solicitor, he wrote an earnest and passionate letter to the Speaker*, and he made strenuous remonstrances in other quarters. In explanation of his views, and for the vindication of his fame, he had, a short time before his last sickness, begun to prepare materials for a complete history of the Impeachment. His subsequent inability to proceed in it was most sensibly felt by him; and it was among his last requests, that his right reverend friend, Dr. King, Bishop of Rochester, would collect and arrange those ma-

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XCI.

1794.
Observations
on his conduct
in this trial.

* In March 1795. I have seen the original. A copy of these charges, from the commencement of proceedings to March 1792, amounting to £36,960, had been laid before the House of Commons, and, with many severe strictures on the items, published by Debrett.

CHAP.
XCI.

1794.
His feelings.

Conduct of the
other
managers.

terials, and publish so much of them as he might judge fit*.

Mr. Burke was intensely desirous that an accurate narrative of the whole proceeding should descend to posterity. He wished to petition Parliament that a publication should take place under the authority of the House of Commons; but no hopes were given him on that head†. He treated some proceedings which took place at the India House, as putting him on his trial, at the suit of Mr. Hastings; entertained a jealousy that government was nursing up Mr. Hastings for the peerage, and spoke with bitter indignation of being made the pimp of Indian peculation and oppression, and the means of proving how right it was to raise a sharpening bullock-contractor above the common level of citizens‡.

There are reasons for thinking, although it cannot be asserted as an absolute fact, that since the separation of Mr. Burke from his former friends, on the great questions arising out of the French Revolution, their support of him in the trial was not so cordial as before. This, at least, is remarkable—that, in his last speech on the subject, Mr. Fox used toward the defendant the only expression of civility which, in so long a period, had met his ears, by compassionating his sufferings during so long a trial, and styling him “the gentle-man at the bar.” It is also related of Mr. Sheridan, that when he was to reply on the Begum charge, he came purposely into court, unprovided with the necessary papers, professing that “he would abuse Ned Law; ridicule Plumer’s long orations; make the Court laugh; please the women, and, with Taylor’s aid, get triumphantly through the task.” Such is

* Burke’s Works, vol. xiii. Introduction by Dr. King, Bishop of Rochester, p. ix.

† Epistolary Correspondence of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke and Dr. French Laurence, p. 45—54. The passage last referred to concludes an exhortation to Dr. Laurence to write a History of the Trial with these words:—“Above all, make out the cruelty of this pretended acquittal, but in reality this barbarous and inhuman condemnation of whole tribes and nations, and of all the classes they contain. If ever Europe recovers its civilization, that work will be useful. Remember! Remember! Remember!”

‡ Epistolary Correspondence by Dr. Laurence, p. 245.

the account given by his biographer; but, without noticing his success in other particulars, it may suffice to say, that he did not always make the court laugh; for he compelled the Lord Chancellor to interrupt him, by demanding references to the printed minutes, and when pressed on the subject, he extricated himself by a discreditable mixture of awkwardness and impudence. "The whole of this characteristic contrivance," the same biographer observes, "was evidently intended by Sheridan to raise that sort of surprise at the readiness of his resources, which it was the favourite triumph of his vanity to create. I have it on the authority of Mr. William Smith, that, previously to the delivery of this speech, he passed two or three days alone at Wanstead, so occupied from morning till night in writing and reading of papers, as to complain in the evening that he had 'motes before his eyes.' This mixture of real labour with apparent carelessness, was, indeed, one of the most curious features of his life and character*."

If the facts are correct, the explanation is far from satisfactory. Mr. Sheridan was conducting to its close a great and interesting trial. He knew that if his fallacy could serve the purposes of a day, every noble lord who had attended the trial could, at his leisure, detect it by a reference to his own papers, and that he must surrender all hopes of permanent fame, for the reputation of a temporary trick. But, if he despaired of success, and the intimations of many of the lords, and the loud expression of public opinion, might well have led him to such a feeling, and if he was no longer desirous of sharing with Mr. Burke either the renown or the obloquy which might attend the result, his conduct was that of a man who desires, whether graciously or otherwise, to make a retreat from a discreditable position.

From the purgation of this tremendous trial, Mr. Hastings emerged with honour, and free from criminal imputation. If there are any who think he was pro-

* Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. ii. p. 249.

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1795.

tected by the distance of the scene of his supposed offences, and the difficulty of procuring evidence, it should be recollected that, during the long term of his active government, he was not only untouched by censure on the spot, but, although an active and invidious majority of the council was ever seeking for causes of accusation, and ready to patronize any one who appeared as his enemy, not one did arise, except Nundcomar*, whose accusation was evidently false and unfounded. Amidst all disadvantages, and under an unexampled pressure of difficulties, he retained the respect and love of all classes; the law, the military, the mercantile body, all were attached to him, and the natives of every caste and class viewed him with veneration and affection.

Mr. Hastings
after his
acquittal.

By the decision of the House of Lords, he was now restored to his free condition in society. He no longer walked abroad a man in legal custody, his bail had no longer the charge of his person, and, in his waking thoughts and nightly slumbers, he was no longer assailed by the recollection of the vituperation he had undergone during the day, and the apprehension that it would be repeated on the morrow; but if, when he returned from India, he entertained a hope that his experience, his knowledge, his firmness, and his vigour, would have smoothed the way to public confidence and official employ, such hopes were effectually blasted. The period at which he could have been so engaged and trusted had elapsed, and, even had there been an inclination to confide in him, the sentences of malice with which he had been so long assailed, would have been renewed and repeated by every disappointed expectant, every malignant opponent, and every scurrilous reviler. It is not to be asserted that his health was destroyed by the persecution he had undergone;

* The mention of Nundcomar gives me an opportunity of correcting a mistake. On the authority of Mr. Gleig, I had asserted (vol. iii. p. 534), that the majority of the Council could have prevented or delayed the execution of this unhappy man. I find, in a critique on Mr. Gleig's work, written by the Right Honourable T. B. Macaulay (Edinburgh Review, vol. lxxiv. p. 189), that the supreme Court alone, and not the Council, had the power of respiting a criminal until the pleasure of the Crown should be known.

but unusual indeed must have been the composition of that frame upon which so long and so cruel an agony of mind did not produce a considerable effect.

His fortune, the subject of so many harsh, invidious, and unfounded reflections, had never been great, and it was miserably reduced by the expenses of his trial. These charges, not in any particular exorbitant, had arisen to £71,080, of which only £10,205 had been paid, the greater portion of the residue had been secured to his solicitor by bond; various other debts, which he had necessarily incurred, carried the amount of his liabilities to £85,000; while the net balance of his fortune, at the highest period of his wealth, namely, on his arrival from India in 1786, had not exceeded £65,314.

These circumstances were fully presented to the consideration of the directors and proprietors of the East India Company, by Mr. Alderman Lushington, and motions were made that the law charges of Mr. Hastings, not exceeding £71,090 should be paid, and an annuity of £5000 settled on him. Many debates were held, not on the propriety of the measure, but on the powers of the Company and the legal mode of carrying into execution any votes they might pass; the opinions of the most eminent counsel were obtained*. The effect of their advice was, an application to the Board of Control. The opinion of the Attorney and Solicitor General was then resorted to; and, finally, under their sanction, the sum proposed as law charges was paid, and an annuity was granted to Mr. Hastings of four thousand pounds, for twenty-eight years and a half, commencing from the 24th of June, 1785; and it was clearly shewn, in the course of the debates, that, in the very matters charged against him as crimes and misdemeanors, he had gained for the Company benefits to the amount of eight millions, all which they ought in justice to have refunded to Cheyt Sing, the Begum, and others, had he been found guilty.

This liberal vote terminated all apprehensions of

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XCI.

1796.

His fortune.

Motions at the
India House.
May 29.

1796.
March 2.
Grant to him.

Vote of
approbation.

* Namely, of Mr. Rous, standing counsel to the Company, Mr. Serjeant Adair, Mr. Mansfield, Mr. Bearcroft, Mr. Erskine, and Mr. Gibbs.

CHAP.
XCI.

1796.

Address from
Calcutta.

His reception
in the House
of Commons.

1815.
At Oxford.

pecuniary difficulty; but the Company performed also a spontaneous act of justice. Mr. Alderman Lushington moved to acknowledge the high sense the court entertained of the important services of Mr. Hastings, the title he had to expect relief from the Company, and earnestly to press that it might be speedily granted. Half-a-dozen gentlemen rose on the instant to second this motion, and it passed unanimously.

When intelligence of the acquittal arrived, the inhabitants of Calcutta convened a meeting at the theatre, and transmitted to Mr. Hastings an address, offering their warmest congratulations. They admired, they said, his patience, fortitude, and resignation; during a trial so unexampled in duration, and a scrutiny into character, motives and actions, the most strict and minute that ever was instituted. They considered an acquittal, under such circumstances, as honourable in the highest degree to him, as well as demonstrative of the impartial justice of our country*.

Mr. Hastings, in retirement, was solaced for the loss of public honours by the homage and admiration of numerous friends, warmly attached to his person, and thoroughly cognizant of his merits. On one occasion, he received from the House of Commons an unexpected and unusual tribute of acknowledgment. Eighteen years after his acquittal (in 1813), he was called to the bar to give evidence on some question relating to India. On his entrance, the whole House rose, and greeted his presence with animated plaudits†.

The University of Oxford thought fit to confer on him the compliment of an honorary degree; and, when he appeared in the theatre to receive it, the young students, the rising hope of the empire, made the building resound with acclamations, louder even, and of longer continuance, than those with which they had

* The debates and votes of the Company are minutely reported, and the opinions of counsel and other documents at large, were published in several pamphlets by Mr. Woodfall; and they are faithfully condensed and abridged in the compilation to which I have so often referred, "The History of the Trial;" and in the quarto volume, published by Debrett, already cited.

† Watkins's Life of Sheridan, vol. i. p. 581.

greeted the imperial and royal visitors, to whom the same tribute had been tendered.

CHAP.
XOI.

Another remarkable incident shewed the altered feeling of one of his most powerful assailants. Mr. Hastings appeared by invitation one evening at Carlton House, when the Prince Regent, with his usual gracious politeness, requested leave to introduce a friend. Mr. Sheridan was the individual brought forward; he took Mr. Hastings by the hand, burst into tears, and rushed out of the room*.

At Carlton
House.

At a later period (January 1820), when the influence of political heat or personal feeling had subsided, when time had been allowed for reflection, when he was removed by death†, and a new race of men, neither friendly nor adverse to him, had obtained a position in society, the East India Company voted a statue to his honour; and it was erected, not in any place selected on account of his birth, his education, his residence, or his death, but in the very scene of his supposed delinquencies, in the town-hall of the city of Calcutta.

Statue erected
to his honour.

* From private information.

† He died on the 29th of August, 1818, at his family seat of Daynesford, in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

CHAPTER THE NINETY-SECOND.

1789 to 1795.

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1789.
Affairs of
Ireland.

GREAT expectations were formed of public good to arise from the mission to Ireland of Earl Fitzwilliam as Lord Lieutenant. To shew how these hopes arose, and how they were disappointed, a retrospect will be necessary. At the period when questions concerning the regency were under discussion, the opposition party impressed the opinion, that independence in legislation could be shewn only by a fierce contentious display of discord and rivalry, indicating offence, and tending to hostility. Hence, resolutions were framed which would have placed two portions of the same dominion, acknowledging obedience to the same sovereign power, under different forms of subjection and government*.

Effect of the
King's recovery.

April 23.

March 3.
Mr. Grattan's
motion on
police.

After the return of the delegates, many members who had deserted from the side of government resumed their accustomed station, and the business of Parliament proceeded in a regular course. An address of congratulation to the King, replete with expressions of love and loyalty, was voted, and a day appointed for a thanksgiving in London was similarly consecrated in Dublin. Yet a spirit of amity was not established; in the debates in the House of Commons, animosity was displayed in unqualified contradictions and contumelious personalities. At the period of the highest irritation, Mr. Grattan produced a motion for a reform, or rather a suppression, of the police of Dublin. In the debate, abuse and scurrility were carried to their greatest height. Interruptions, calls to order, and the intervention of the Speaker, were resorted to in vain; strangers were excluded during a whole hour, and the

* See vol. iv. pp. 367—391.

speeches which took place in that period are consequently unreported; but of that which occurred before and afterward, enough is retained to make every lover of free discussion regret that it should be so much perverted*. Other heated conflicts took place, on attempts to disqualify certain officers of the revenue from sitting in Parliament, or voting at elections; on the commutation of tithes; reversionary grants; and the pension list: but in none of them was so much ferocity displayed as in that already mentioned. In the whole course of the session it was observed that the majority was steady and increasing; a circumstance which did not diminish the rage and rancour of their opponents. The disqualification bill was lost on a division†.

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Other motions.

April 21.

Whig Club.

To counterbalance the defection of their partizans in Parliament, and to consolidate their force into a common centre of union, the opposition party had established a society called the Whig Club, the members of which adopted the principles and uniform, and professed to act in concert with that in England. In its formation, it presented no visible point of objection. Among its leading members were the Duke of Leinster, the Earls of Charlemont and Moira, Mr. Grattan, and Mr. Curran, and a long list of eminent individuals. Plans of political operation were prepared and digested at their private meetings, while, at their public dinners, speeches of great political fervour, abounding with invectives against government and its measures, were uttered, and were reported with additional virulence in the public press. Such an association might not, at first, be considered dangerous; but it was not difficult to foresee that the doors of the original institution must soon be opened to admit characters far less respectable than those who were its founders, and that other societies would be formed, in professed imitation, but exempting themselves from all reserve and restraint which birth, education, and position in society

* For an account of this debate, with judicious observations, see Plowden, vol. ii. p. 256; and, for a full detail, the Parliamentary Register, vol. ix. p. 252.
† 148 to 93.

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required from the eminent men whom they would profess to follow. Such societies were likely to produce mischief, particularly as the bodies formerly so troublesome, under the names of "Peep-of-day Boys" and "Defenders," still maintained a disposition to insurrection, which was confirmed and supported by other secret associations, cemented by oaths, rendered impressive by injunctions to secrecy, and solemn forms of confraternity. Their pernicious effect was speedily extended to many parts of the kingdom.

The Marquis
of Bucking-
ham retires.

The popular propositions agitated in Parliament were not generally new; but they were brought forward and adorned with new invectives, for the purpose of impairing the credit of the Marquis of Buckingham*. The public favour he had enjoyed, when, under the title of Lord Nugent, he had been Lord Lieutenant in 1782, was entirely destroyed. Impatient of his situation, and not without apprehension of personal violence, he embarked privately for England, having first appointed, as lords justices, Mr. (now made Chancellor, with the title of Lord) Fitzgibbon and Mr. Foster, the speaker of the House of Commons†.

June 30.

1790.
Succeeded by
the Earl of
Westmore-
land.

January 21.
Proceedings
in Parliament.
22nd.
Mr. Grattan.

His successor, the Earl of Westmoreland, soon perceived that he was called to a station replete with difficulties, in which favour was not to be expected from any mode of conduct which, consistently with his duties, a chief governor could pursue. On the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Grattan declined opposing the address to the Lord Lieutenant; but, when one to the King was proposed, expressing sentiments of loyal attachment, with thanks for the new appointment, he detailed the principles on which an opposition was to be conducted. He inveighed against all the measures of the retired ruler, charging him with gross misconduct from the worst of motives. "You remember," he said, "his entry into the capital, trampling on the

* See a pamphlet intitled *Common Sense*, by a Candid Inquirer. Dublin, 1789.

† "His Excellency," Mr. Plowden observes, vol. ii. p. 275, "took shipping from Mr. Lee's elegant villa at the Black Rock. It was observed, by Mr. Charles O'Neale, in a debate, that if he had not taken a back-stairs departure from that kingdom, he would in all probability have been greeted on his retreat in a very different manner from what he had been on his arrival in Ireland."

“ hearse of the Duke of Rutland, and seated in a triumphal car, drawn by public credulity; on one side fallacious hope, and on the other many-mouthed profession—a figure with two faces, one turned to the treasury, and the other presented to the people; and, with a double tongue, speaking contradictory languages.” In terms conformable to the promise of this distorted portraiture, he described all the principal acts of the late Governor, and in the same tone conducted all the measures of opposition; and although their efforts were not attended with success in Parliament, they left on the public mind that deep impression which is ever produced by vehement attacks, however skilfully parried, or powerfully resisted.

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Debates, equally distinguished by vehemence, irregularity, and personality, took place on motions by Mr. Grattan, Mr. Curran, and Mr. Forbes, on different topics of official appointment and public expenditure. The objects of opposition, could they gain power, were avowed to be the obtainment of pension, place, and responsibility bills; to the support of which, and other salutary measures, they had publicly and solemnly pledged themselves: and although the motions were unsuccessful, it was observed that the strength of the opposition was increasing.

Feb. 1, 4, 11.
Motions by
Mr. Grattan,
Mr. Curran,
and
Mr. Forbes.

Amidst many propositions, brought forward without hope of success, and probably for display and popularity alone, one question was introduced of considerable importance to liberty, founded on a gross abuse in the administration of the law. It had been the practice of judges, in cases of slander, to issue fiats for arresting defendants, and holding them to bail in such sums as might be sworn to by the plaintiffs, as the amount of damages which they supposed themselves to have sustained. John Magee, proprietor of the Dublin Evening Post, presented a petition to the House of Commons, representing that, for supposed libels of a slight and unimportant description, fiats against him had been issued, by the authority of the judges, at the suit of a theatrical manager, an actress, and a person named Higgins, for sums of £4000, £1000, and £2000. The

Fiats.

March 3.
Magee's case.

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flagrant enormity of this proceeding made a great impression ; but as it was strictly warranted by law, and the practice had been sanctioned by the judges in full court, as well as by the chief justice at his chambers, one house of Parliament could not with propriety interfere, and a motion on the subject, made by Mr. George Ponsonby, was rejected on a division*. In the course of a learned and often angry debate, the characters of the party complaining and that of Lord Clonmell were amply discussed, and many severe observations made on the conduct of the learned Chief Justice†. Such a practice as that complained of could not fail to produce frequent animadversions ; and although no immediate redress was obtained, future benefit might confidently be expected from the present exposure.

April 5, 8.
Dissolution of
Parliament.

Effect of the
French revolution.

Parliament was dissolved soon after the prorogation ; and as the event was not unexpected, it may well be believed that many of the recent motions, and much of the violence and contumely displayed in supporting them, proceeded from the hope of acquiring suffrages in the approaching contest. The revolution in France, although its progress had already been marked by atrocities sufficient to warn the discerning, and alarm the prudent, had not yet exhibited its greatest horrors, and still left room speciously to palliate its present enormities, as proceeding from the struggles of a brave and oppressed people shaking off the shackles of despotism : nor was it difficult to inspire with sympathy the people, who were represented as, equally with the French, the victims of despotism, and who were artfully, and among some too effectually, incited to throw off the yoke, and form a constitution founded on a declaration of the Rights of Man‡.

* 125 to 91.

† For a description of Lord Clonmell, drawn with more attention to epigrammatic point than to exact historical truth, see Sir Jonah Barrington's *Historic Memoirs*, vol i p. 37.

‡ A strong, but not singular, instance of this propensity to follow French example, occurred in the late session (Feb. 4). Some vehement, or even ferocious, observations having been applied to the Marquis of Buckingham, and reference made to proceedings in Paris, Mr. Bushe mentioned a transaction which had occurred in his own presence. When a man was accused of being an enemy to liberty, he was not allowed a trial ; but the mob at once pronounced

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Acts of the
Whig Club.

In opposing government out of Parliament, the Whig Club was extremely conspicuous. The number of its members was enlarged without a proportionate augmentation of respectability; and opinions were promulgated, on every popular occasion, tending to inflame discontent and create rancour. They issued a resolution signed by Mr. Grattan, as pro-secretary, describing the measures to which, should their party attain power, they were all pledged, in these terms: All the rejected propositions of the late sessions were enumerated as measures to which they were pledged, and they bound themselves to disallow the corrupt charges of the Marquis of Buckingham and his successor; to the principles whereon the late Parliament addressed the Prince of Wales to take on himself the regency; against an Union; and to oppose the misconstruction or alteration of the act of the thirty-third of George the Second, whereby the Commons of Dublin have a peremptory right of rejection*.

Societies were formed to correspond with and support the principles of this club; the spirit of those who had been volunteers was earnestly appealed to, and with the more effect as Lord Charlemont was a distinguished leader of the club; the Roman Catholics, not yet banded in a firm political association, began to display a disposition to contend for alterations in the laws affecting them; bodies of united Irishmen were formed, and the press was actively employed to inflame the public mind.

Othersocieties.

that he was sentenced ("Il est jugé," was their phrase), and he was instantly hurried à la lanterne. One day, seeing an extraordinary concourse dragging a poor wretch along, he heard a Frenchman ask another what was the matter? "Rien, Monsieur," he replied, "mais un Marquis, qu'on va pendre."—"Bon, bon," answered the other; "mais qu'a-t-il fait?"—"Je ne sais pas," said the patriot. This would be exactly their case, were they to condemn the acts of the Marquis of Buckingham without any manner of evidence. Should any one demand of a member of this house why he had done so? his answer must be *je ne sais pas*. To this, Mr. Charles O'Neil answered, that if he were to meet the Marquis of Buckingham in a similar situation, he should not answer "*je ne sais pas*," but say he was going to receive the deserved reward of his attempts to subvert the constitutional independence of the Parliament of Ireland.

* This last pledge was founded on a dispute respecting the election of a Lord Mayor of Dublin, in which Mr. James Napper Tandy, afterward very conspicuous in the troubles of his country, headed an opposition of the commonalty against the Court of Aldermen. See Observations on the Vindication of the Whig Club, page 58.

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 1790.
Conduct of
Lord West-
moreland.

Yet, with all these efforts, the result of the general election was not unfavourable to government. Lord Westmoreland used endeavours to acquire popularity which his predecessor had contemned or neglected. In a country excursion of nearly nine months, he visited most of the nobility; on all solemn occasions, he and his lady appeared clad in Irish manufactures; and, though apparently a trifle, the permission to represent the Beggar's Opera, which had been prohibited during the preceding government, gained him no small share of public favour*.

 July 2 to 24.
Session of
Parliament.

In a short summer session of the new Parliament, the opposition party made no considerable exertion. Mr. Foster was re-instated in the chair; the speech of the Lord Lieutenant announced the dispute with Spain concerning Nootka Sound; the address was not only unopposed, but supported by Mr. Grattan; and the principal, if not the only, object of convening the Legislature, a vote of credit for £200,000, was accomplished without any division or important adverse observation.

 1791.
January 20.

Fiats limited.

When the session was resumed for the real dispatch of business, the apprehension of a war with Spain had vanished; but some of the measures indicated by the Whig Club were vigorously, though unsuccessfully, brought forward, the arguments displaying no feature of novelty: a large portion of personal abuse was vented; and the speeches were obviously, and almost avowedly, addressed to the gallery and not to the chair. On the renewal of the question concerning fiats in actions of slander, the Attorney-General successfully introduced a bill, declaring that no such process should issue without an affidavit; and enacting that the discretion of judges, even when such a document was filed, should be limited to a sum not exceeding two hundred pounds. In fact, the gross enormity of the proceedings under the existing law rendered the remedy undeniably obvious†.

* Plowden, vol. ii. p. 309.

† Taking the case of Magee for an instance, in the action in which he was required to put in bail for £4000, he had ineffectually tendered sureties in full

To the introduction of questions tending to embarrass government and agitate the people, the times were becoming daily more favourable. The lower class of the Irish, a race robust and hardy in body, and with minds extremely irritable, indolent, and in extreme poverty, professed for the most part the Roman Catholic religion, and had hitherto been restrained from acts of illegal violence by their priests* ; but measures were now pursued tending to increase their discontent and make their priests co-operate in measures of hostility to government. The course of political discussion during the American war, and for some time afterward, led, if not immediately, yet inevitably, to many errors and crimes. The common people, observing the conduct of the Americans, rejoiced in the armament of the volunteers. That body, it is true, had restrained the fermentation and excesses of mere mobs ; but their authoritative dictation on state affairs in 1782, and their subsequent general conduct, tended visibly to destroy the principle of submission and acquiescence. Political institutions were impeached at Dungannon, taxes and commercial regulations in Dublin ; every corps produced its reforming statesman ; the projects promulgated under the name of liberty in the metropolis were reiterated in every village, and the priests complained that, while, by their exertions in support of government, they had diminished their credit and influence with their own flocks, they had not, like others, received commensurate support†. To forward the ends of faction, Paine's Rights of Man and similar productions, pieced out with popular truisms, were circulated at low prices or distributed gratis, and received with avidity. Mr. Theobald Wolfe Tone, the agent most employed and trusted by the Catholics, looked for the reception of his plans to the north of

court to the amount of £500: the cause was tried, and the jury awarded to the plaintiff only £200, while the defendant had been kept in custody for twenty times that amount.

* The Case Stated, by Francis Plowden, p. 19; and see his History of Ireland, vol. iv. p. 153.

† Thoughts on the Civil Condition and Relations of the Roman Catholic Clergy, Religion, and People of Ireland, by Theobald M'Kenna, p. 218.

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Ireland, and particularly the town of Belfast, the seat of commerce and manufacture, where, according to Mr. Tone's own expression, Paine's book was their Koran*.

Observations.

If, as their friends contend, the Roman Catholics were, at this period, struggling only for the removal of restraints and disabilities which, supposing them to have been necessary when they were enacted, were now merely the badges of disgrace and the means of oppression; if their intentions were only by legal and peaceable means, without the use or menace of violence, to procure their restoration to a position in society from which no free person in a free country ought to be excluded, except for his personal offences, a claim is justly advanced for the well-disposed portion of their body, that they should not be judged or stigmatized by the revolutionary principles or rebellious acts of some who appeared as their leaders. But it would be difficult to grant them the benefit of this exception, if they sanctioned or did not openly repudiate the acts and principles of those leaders so soon as their malignant tendency could be perceived; still more, if they continued to honour them with their confidence, and, without directly avowing all their proceedings, supported them with their countenance, their credit, and their pecuniary contributions, even when the full extent of their disloyalty was proved. The commencement and course of proceedings of the United Irishmen, the conduct of the Roman Catholics in the whole progress of them, the basis on which their complaints were founded, and the end to which their aims were directed, all tend to shew that a great many Roman Catholics entered into their views and furthered their intentions; a portion, restrained by prudence or governed by a better spirit than those who gave themselves up to every violence, is often cited as sanctioning an opinion favourable to the whole

* Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone, vol. i. pp. 40, 141. This work, written by himself, continued and edited by his Son, and published in two volumes octavo, at Washington in 1826, will be quoted hereafter merely as Wolfe Tone.

body, while the publications which they sanctioned and the acts they committed form a strong foundation for the contrary opinion.

On the day when they were to celebrate the capture of the Bastile, Mr. Tone transmitted to a party at Belfast a draft of resolutions reduced to three heads. First, that English influence in Ireland was the great grievance of the country. Second, that the most effectual way to oppose it was by a reform in Parliament. Third, that no reform could be just or efficacious which did not include the Catholics; but, as a concession to prejudices, the last resolution was rather insinuated than asserted, and it was for the present rejected. Secret committees, both of Catholics and of reformers, having been established, such an alteration in politics was effected, that in three months propositions which had been deemed too hazardous to be advanced were considered too tame, and a new declaration, with resolutions, was framed. "In the present great era of reform," it said, "when unjust governments are falling in every quarter of Europe; when religious persecution is compelled to abjure her tyranny over conscience; when the rights of men are ascertained in theory, and that theory substantiated by practice; when antiquity can no longer defend absurd and oppressive forms against the common sense and common interests of mankind; when all government is acknowledged to originate from the people, and to be so far only obligatory as it protects their rights and promotes their welfare; we think it our duty, as Irishmen, to come forward and state what we feel to be our heavy grievance and what we know to be its effectual remedy. We have no national government; we are ruled by Englishmen and the servants of Englishmen, whose object is the interest of another country, whose instrument is corruption, and whose strength is the weakness of Ireland; and these men have the whole power and patronage of the country, as means to seduce and to subdue the honesty and spirit of her representatives in the Legislature. Such an extrin-

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July 14.
Meetings at
Belfast.

October.
Declaration
and Resolu-
tions.

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United Irish-
men.Proceedings
in Dublin.

December 30.

Mr. Burke's
Letter to Sir
H. Langrishe.

"sic power, acting with uniform force in a direction too frequently opposite to the true line of our obvious interests, can be resisted with effect solely by unanimity, decision, and spirit in the people; qualities which may be exerted most legally, constitutionally, and efficaciously, by that great measure essential to the prosperity and freedom of Ireland—an equal representation of all the people in Parliament."

On these principles, they had agreed to form an association, to be called "The Society of United Irishmen;" and pledged themselves, to their country and mutually to each other, steadily to support and endeavour, by all due means, to carry into effect resolutions for diminishing the means of English influence by a radical reform in Parliament, in the formation of which, Irishmen of every religious persuasion should be included; and they exhorted their countrymen in every quarter of the kingdom to form similar societies*.

In Dublin, the Belfast declaration was cordially adopted; and, under the auspices of Mr. Napper Tandy, a constitution was formed; an oath, comprising, among other things, an engagement never, directly or indirectly, to inform or give evidence against any member of that or similar societies, for any act or expression done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of society; they further agreed to pay sums of money by way of subscription, and published a circular letter, declaring and enforcing their sentiments, principles, and measures†.

Numerous pamphlets were published on both sides, dogmatical, inflammatory, and ludicrous; but a great accession to the Catholic cause was gained in Mr. Burke's letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, in which he advocated it with his accustomed force and fertility; but without those violent declamatory eruptions which so often distinguished his productions‡. His son, Ri-

* Wolfe Tone, vol. i. p. 367.

† Musgrave's *Memoirs of the Rebellions*, vol. i. p. 112, and vol. ii. Appendix, 6, 7, 8, p. 228 et seqq.

‡ Works, 8vo. vol. vi. p. 297.

chard, was sent to Dublin as secretary to the committee, and to advise, support, and assist the Catholics. Both the pamphlet and the mission occasioned many vituperative remarks, both from the ordinary manufacturers of controversial wares and authors of more considerable rank and estimation*. The great question itself was of a nature too extensive to be decided either on abstract principles of mere moral or social justice, or of rigid adherence to regulations resisted as no longer required by the state of society or temper of the parties affected. The question really raised was, whether concession could safely and properly be made, or whether it would serve only as the basis for demands more extravagant, and endanger the existence of the established Protestant church.

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His son sent
to Dublin.

Preparatory to the effort intended to be made in Parliament, Mr. Richard Burke visited, consulted, and animated all whom he thought the cause or the name of his father could influence; the societies in all parts of the country redoubled their efforts to gain partizans and to infuse alarm; all the armed corps of volunteers attended and fired *feux de joie*, to celebrate the taking of the Bastile; and the society at Bordeaux, although no appearance of interrupted tranquillity between Great Britain and France then existed, returned an answer to that at Belfast, teeming with expressions of encouragement to them and of hatred and hostility to England. In several counties much alarm was felt; and in Armagh, particularly, the Grand Jury at the assizes pledged themselves to each other, as magistrates and individuals, to stop dangerous proceedings and restore tranquillity; and proffered a reward of five guineas for the first conviction of twenty persons illegally armed and assembled

Further pro-
ceedings.

* One assertion, made either through malice or misconception, concerning Mr. Burke, is, that he was himself a Roman Catholic both by descent and marriage; and that, however circumstances might have induced him to cast a veil over his principles, they were invariably directed to favour the doctrines of that church.—Musgrave, vol. i. p. 40. To this it is answered, that, although from family connexions, not unusual in Ireland, many of his relatives, and the father of his wife, were of that religion, he had always belonged to the church of England; and by arrangements among the ancestors of his wife, she was secured against the education and principles of popery.—Prior's Life of Burke, vol. i. page 60, vol. ii. page 322.

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Division in
the Catholic
body.
April 18.

While these measures were preparing and in progress, the general committee of the Catholics, assembled in Dublin, took into consideration the resolutions and instructions of the provincial meetings. Their unusually bold and offensive nature, the address of the United Irishmen of Belfast to the Jacobin society at Bordeaux, and their answer*, caused a difference of opinion, and produced a separation among the Catholics. Three barristers, the Honourable Simon Butler, brother of Lord Mountgarret, Mr. Wolfe Tone, and Mr. Todd Jones, having been selected and confided in as fit representatives of the most violent of their party, and particularly to recommend an union between the Catholic body and the dissenters, sixty-four of the most respectable, including Lord Kenmare and the Earl of Fingal, withdrew from the committee, and presented an address to the Lord Lieutenant, expressing the respectful submission of themselves and the Catholic body to government, and their resignation to its wisdom and humanity. The rest of the members, persevering in their pursuit, passed resolutions in which the conduct of Lord Fingal was severely censured, and formed a new committee of twenty-one. A petition to Parliament was prepared, but, owing to these differences, was not presented†.

December 27.

1792.

January 6.

January 16.
Meeting of
Parliament.
Mr. Grattan
on the Ad-
dress.

On the meeting of Parliament, the motion for the address drew from Mr. Grattan a violent invective against the proceedings of government for the last ten years, and a revision of the several measures concerning which motions had been ineffectually presented. This could only have been made for the purpose of increasing public discontent, as a negative or an amendment to the address was not so much as intimated; but the matters treated on served by turns as themes for debates in the course of the session.

Exertions of
the Catholics.

Hitherto the efforts of the Roman Catholics, and other societies, had occasioned uneasiness rather than serious apprehension. The resolves of the Whig club had been treated in Parliament as deserving of no

* Plowden, vol. ii. page 333.

† Gordon's History of Ireland, vol. ii. page 327.

more consideration than any similar effusion issued by an eating and drinking party at any vulgar porter house; the boast of the Catholic committee, that they represented three millions of people, was reduced to its just value, by observing that this gross number included women, children, and priests; that the thinking and respectable portion could be unanimous was denied, especially after the secession of Lord Kenmare and his friends; and, above all, the committee was alleged to be self-constituted, and not publicly nominated by the entire body, or existing under any avowed or ostensible sanction. To obviate a portion of these objections, meetings were held in various parts of the country; the Roman Catholics of Dublin were alert, and persevering in their endeavours, and it was generally felt that some concessions were inevitable.

In pursuance of a notice given, on the first day of the session, Sir Hercules Langrishe moved to bring in a bill for removing certain restraints and disabilities affecting the Roman Catholics. In a temperate speech, he recapitulated, with acknowledgments of their liberality, the various acts which had passed in 1774, 1778, and 1782. Considering the nature of man, the obstinacy of old opinions, and the usual acrimony of religious dissension, so signal a triumph over rooted prejudices disclosed a growing confidence, an amicable sympathy, a relenting heart, in the predominant powers of the state, which ought to conciliate affection, engage gratitude, and confirm attachment: and that effect had been produced. It was the duty of those who approached the legislature, he said, to advance by the avenues the constitution had marked out; by petition, not by representation or remonstrance; if they would have benefits, they must solicit them as favours, and accept them as concessions. After some observations on the supposed natural rights of man, of which so much had lately been heard, he affirmed that the loyalty of the Roman Catholics of Ireland would not permit them to taste of the cup of sedition. Under the constitution, he observed, the predominancy was Protestant. It was so declared at the revolution; the

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Motion of Sir
H. Langrishe.
25th.

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King's coronation oath was enjoined in order to keep it so; the King and every other member of the state, legislative and executive, stood bound under the obligation of the oath of abjuration. He would not rashly hazard the stability of so noble a fabric to remove even an acknowledged defect; but he claimed for the Roman Catholics the practice and profession of the law; a restoration of education entire and unrestrained; the allowance of intermarriage, and a repeal of that cruel statute that served to betray female credulity, and bastardize the children of a virtuous mother; and a removal of those obstructions to arts and manufactures that limited the number of apprentices.

Leave given.

Not without some reflections on the associations of the Roman Catholics, and on their English agent, leave was granted, without a division; but when it had been obtained, Mr. O'Hara proposed to lay before the House an exact statement of the wishes of the Roman Catholics in respect of relief, and this because a friend had requested it. This friend was Mr. Richard Burke; he had incautiously intruded into the body of the House, behind the Speaker's chair, when there arose a general cry of "Into custody!" but he avoided the disgrace by a precipitate retreat*.

Indiscretion of
Mr. Richard
Burke.

Mr. Grattan.

Mr. Grattan denied that any seditious publications could justly be ascribed to the Roman Catholics; nor did he see how gentlemen could assent to a bill which supposed their merits, and to insinuations bespeaking the contrary. "What you give to them," he said, "give liberally; what you refuse, refuse decently; whatever you do, do with discretion; whatever you say, let it be the language of propriety and good manners."

Progress of
the bill.

During the progress of the bill, much agitation and ill humour prevailed out of the House; the students in the University of Dublin behaved in a manner so riot-

* Debates, vol. xii. p. 41. Musgrave, vol. i. p. 138. The Solicitor-general turned the event into ridicule, by happily comparing it to a cross-reading of a newspaper, at the period when foolish petitioners flocked to Saint James's, with the nonsense of the day. "A most violent petition was presented to the House of Commons. It luckily missed fire, and the villain made off."

ous, that the supposed privilege of persons in gowns entering the galleries as matter of right was suppressed, and they, like others, could be admitted only on introduction by members*. Mr. Napper Tandy contrived to make himself conspicuous by writing letters to the Solicitor-general, on a reported speech of his, and, not receiving an answer, sending him a challenge. For this breach of privilege, it was ordered that he should be brought to the bar in custody; he was apprehended, but escaped, and remained in concealment until the last day of the session, when he surrendered, and was committed to Newgate; but in a few hours the House was prorogued, and he was liberated: so that his punishment was, to his taste, and that of his faction, a triumph†.

The bill was carried to the upper House by an unusual concourse of members, where it speedily passed, and received the confirmatory assent. Its effect was to substitute the oath of allegiance simply, for that hitherto required on the admission of barristers, attorneys, or notaries; but barristers so qualifying were not to be King's Counsel. Restrictions on attorneys taking Roman Catholic clerks, on the education of children, and on barristers intermarrying with Roman Catholics, were removed, and the admission of students to the King's Inns of Court was facilitated. Marriages between Protestants and Papists were allowed to be performed by Protestant clergymen, and such marriage no longer incapacitated the husband from voting at elections. Acts relating to foreign education, to teaching or keeping schools without licence from the ordinary, and to taking apprentices, were also abolished‡.

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Conduct of
the Students,
and Mr.
NapperTandy.

Bill passed.

Its provisions.

* Debates, vol. xii. p. 44.

† When a proclamation was issued for apprehending him, a hand-bill was posted generally, and even on the walls of the House of Commons, "The members of a certain great house, not far from the college, are hereby cautioned how they persecute to ruin a virtuous citizen, for defending his character, and asserting the liberties of Ireland; if they do not, let them beware of the awl of the cobbler of Messina." (Musgrave, vol. i. p. 139.) It is also worthy of remark, that, in the course of the session (on the 27th of February,) the dome of the house of Parliament was destroyed by fire in the middle of the day, and while the members were sitting. A suspicion was entertained that the conflagration had been occasioned by design; but a committee, appointed to investigate, reported it was mere accident. Ib. 136.

‡ 32 Geo. III. c. 21. Irish Statutes, and those as to which the Roman Catho-

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Expressions
of complete
satisfaction.

April 18.

Fallacious.

By some it was hoped that this act would satisfy expectation and terminate discontent. When it passed the House of Commons, Sir Hercules Langrishe described it as a new covenant, a new charter of amity and intercourse among Irishmen; and felt inexpressible pride in observing, that what Parliament had granted, they had granted with cordiality and good will, with a confident heart, an unreluctant hand, and an unanimous voice; and Mr. Grattan hailed these sentiments as calculated always to do honour to Sir Hercules. One member congratulated the House and the nation on the firmness that the representative body had shewn in refusing to the Roman Catholics every thing injurious; and their liberality, in granting them every advantage consistent with the Protestant ascendancy. In presenting the money bills to the Lord Lieutenant, the Speaker expressed similar sentiments, and his Excellency, when he prorogued Parliament, said, he had his Majesty's commands to express his approbation of the wisdom that had guided their proceedings.

Hopes that these arrangements would be definitive, if ever they were seriously entertained, could be founded only on the eagerness of desire, not on the sure grounds of experience and political sagacity. Concession yielded to proud demand, not humble request, always gives encouragement to requisitions more extensive, and, far from satisfying, only whets and increases the eagerness of expectation; nor is it possible ever to sustain the agreement entered into by the discontented party: the demagogue of to-morrow rejects with scorn the specific arrangements made by him of to-day; the ground under him is as firm, and his pretensions as fiercely urged, as those of his predecessor. Thus the points conceded were not of a nature or extent to appease the desires which had already been announced, much less to accomplish those alterations to which the state of the times afforded so much encouragement. While the bill was under consideration in Parliament, the Catholic Committee pursued measures and

Acts of the
Catholic
Committee.

lics were relieved, 7 W. III. c. 3; 2 Anne, c. 6; 6 Anne, c. 6; 8 Anne, c. 3; 1 Geo. II. c. 5; and 7 Geo. II. c. 5.

issued publications exciting the public to much more determined declarations. By their direction, Mr. Simon Butler drew up a statement of all the laws imposing restraints on their body; the claim to Protestant ascendancy was decried as mere perpetuated usurpation; and, far from receiving thanks or expressions of approbation for his efforts, Sir Hercules Langrishe was censured, as having weakened, if not betrayed, their cause, by the "puny relief which was obtained in his pompous bill*."

While this measure was yet in contemplation, Mr. Richard Burke had retired from the secretaryship of the Catholic Committee, and returned to England. It is said that he was not held in so much estimation as he justly expected; while, on the other hand, it is alleged that his own want of temper and discretion, exhibited in the composition of a paper, intended as a petition, but which was a mere philippic, occasioned its rejection by all parties; that his overweening opinion of his own talents and judgment, and a desire, that he had not art enough to conceal, of guiding, at his pleasure, the measures of the committee, occasioned the distaste which terminated in separation. He was desirous to return, and made advances in vain; Mr. Wolfe Tone had been appointed his successor, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year†.

This nomination produced a considerable effect on the subsequent proceedings of the Catholics. Mr. Tone, according to his own account, was of humble, though respectable, origin; his education was not altogether neglected, but indolently and inefficiently pursued; he was entered as a student of the Middle Temple, and, although he abhorred the very sight of a law-book, was, after undergoing much of the humiliation attendant on poverty combined with pride and idleness, called to the Irish bar; but ignorance of his

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Mr. Richard
Burke retires.

Succeeded by
T. W. Tone.

Particulars
concerning
him.

* The phrase of Mr. Plowden, History, vol. ii. p. 377.

† These facts concerning Mr. Richard Burke are derived from the Life of T. W. Tone, vol. i. p. 60 to 65; probably this statement is, in some particulars, too highly coloured. Mr Richard Burke did not return to Ireland. On his father's retreat from Parliament, he was elected member for Maldon: and when Earl Fitzwilliam was about to be appointed Lord Lieutenant, it was intended that he should attend him as secretary; but he died of consumption, 2nd August, 1794. Prior's Life of Burke, vol. ii. p. 265.

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profession, and neglect of the means of obtaining success, left him without hope of advancement. His mind being entirely prepossessed with ideas of military glory and colonial improvement, he had attempted some intercourse on the latter subject with Mr. Pitt; but, meeting a rebuff, his temper was exasperated, and his resentment fixed into hatred of Great Britain. He attached himself to the Whig Club in Ireland, made some literary essays, which were well received; but, on the dispute with Spain respecting Nootka Sound, went to such extremes in maintaining the independence of Ireland in a question of peace or war, that the publication was suppressed by his own bookseller. He does not appear to have been a strenuous supporter of any particular form of religion; but in politics he considered that the influence of England was the radical vice of the Irish government; and, consequently, that Ireland would never be either free, prosperous, or happy, until she was restored to independence by destroying the connexion with Great Britain*.

Principles of
the French
revolution
adopted.

The proceedings which were taking place in France furnished to the disaffected in Ireland at once an encouragement and a model.

Efforts in the
north of
Ireland.

Feeling that the Roman Catholics of Dublin were to those of Ireland in general, what, at the commencement of the revolution, Paris was to the departments†, corresponding committees were formed, and widely established. As the great focus of discontent was known to be in the north of Ireland, the United Irishmen projected in that quarter an impressive display.

Second
anniversary
at Belfast.

In the spring, it was announced that the anniversary of the capture of the Bastille would be celebrated at Belfast with great ceremony, accompanied with a review of the volunteers, not only of the town, but the whole province of Ulster. By instruction from the committee of United Irishmen, Dr. Drennan prepared an address to the people of France, and Mr. Wolfe Tone another to those of Ireland; and they, with many of the Catholic committee, were invited.

July 14.

* Wolfe Tone, vol. i. p. 32.

† The expression of Wolfe Tone, vol. i. p. 61.

The ceremony was performed with great pomp and splendour: several emblematical figures and representations were exhibited, with appropriate inscriptions*. After the review, the volunteers and inhabitants, to the number of about six thousand, assembled in the Linen Hall, and unanimously voted the address to the French. That to the people of Ireland being directly and unequivocally in favour of the Catholic claims, some opposition was expected; but several of the dissenting clergy, of great popularity, not only assented, but one of them moved the two addresses, and no great display of adverse feeling took place†. Thus was the great point gained of uniting the Roman Catholics and the Protestant dissenters, hitherto so hostile to each other, in a common bond of association; and it was boasted of as one of the characteristic circumstances of the day, that, checquered at the head of the table, sat dissenter and Catholic. Four flags were displayed, of America, France, Poland, Ireland, but no England†.

Inflammatory publications were more than ever distributed, cheaply or gratuitously; and twelve active and intelligent inhabitants of Belfast subscribed two hundred and fifty pounds each, to set on foot a newspaper, whose object should be to give a statement of all that passed in France, whither all turned their eyes; to inculcate the necessity of union amongst Irishmen of all religious persuasions; to support the emancipation of the Catholics; and, finally, as the necessary, though not avowed, consequence of all this, to erect Ireland into a separate, independent republic. The paper, called "the Northern Star," instantly obtained a rapid and extensive sale. The leading

Publication of
the Northern
Star.

* On a group of figures, drawn by horses, was the following inscription: "The releasement of the prisoners of the Bastille." On the reverse was a figure of "Hibernia, with one hand and foot in shackles, and a volunteer presenting to her a figure of Liberty." The following motto was inscribed on another: "Our Gallic brethren were born July 14, 1789; alas! we are still in embryo." On the reverse, "Superstitious jealousy the cause of the Irish Bastille: let us unite and destroy it." Among them appeared the portrait of Doctor Franklin, with the motto, "Where liberty is, there is my country."

† From Plowden, vol. ii. p. 381, and Wolfe Tone, vol. i. p. 68.

† Moore's Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. i. p. 204.

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*Opinions of
foreign univer-
sities on the
Pope's autho-
rity.*

Catholics, throughout Ireland, were subscribers, and it was one effective means of completing the union of the two great sects*.

At a former period, by desire of Mr. Pitt it is said, preparatory to the introduction of a bill into the British Parliament†, opinions were obtained from the universities of Paris, Louvain, Alcala, Douay, Salamanca, and Valladolid, on the questions, whether the Pope or Cardinals, or any body of men, or any individuals of the church of Rome, had any civil authority, power, jurisdiction, or pre-eminence within the realms of England? whether any of those persons could, on any pretence, absolve or dispense his Majesty's subjects from their oath of allegiance? and whether there was any principle in the tenets of their faith by which Catholics were justified in not keeping faith with heretics, in any transaction either of a public or private nature? To all these queries, each of the universities firmly and unequivocally answered in the negative‡.

From this document it was inferred, and by the partizans of the Roman Catholic cause it was strenuously argued, that their religion afforded no sanction to dangerous opinions; and it was asserted that their tried and acknowledged loyalty for a long series of years was a sufficient guarantee for their good conduct, whatever concessions might be made; but the effect of these inferences and assertions was much impaired by the proceedings of the Roman Catholics themselves, and the factious and daring bodies with which and their perilous political propositions they had become identified. Emancipation was put forward as the desire of all; reform of Parliament was avowedly, and separation from Great Britain not very covertly, included in their designs. The efforts of the United Irishmen to blend the Roman Catholics and the Protestant Dissenters in one co-operating mass, were forwarded by a daring and desperate body called Defenders; a peaceful appeal to any government was no

Defenders.

* Wolfe Tone, vol. i. p. 67

† See vol. iv. p. 623.

‡ Plowden, vol. ii. Appendix, 91, p. 199, and the same queries, with the answers, are given in numerous pamphlets and other publications.

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longer considered as more than an ostensible proceeding; nocturnal violence, conflagration, plunder of arms, and murder, were of frequent occurrence; and, although the perpetrators were able for a time to elude or defy justice, the instigators were well known, and avowed themselves by defending the acts done, and extolling the motives*.

To diminish the disadvantages resulting to their cause from the recent secession, the Roman Catholics published a declaration disavowing all the tenets which the foreign universities had rejected, renouncing many of the articles of belief in the Pope's infallibility, power, and authority, which were commonly imputed to them, solemnly disclaiming all interest and title in forfeited lands not established and acknowledged by the existing laws, and expressing their desire that, when a participation in the elective franchise should be restored to them, every Catholic voter should take an oath to defend to the utmost of his power the arrangement of property established by the different acts of attainder and settlement, and professing their readiness, in such case, in the most solemn manner, to declare that they would not exercise the privilege of voting to disturb or weaken the Protestant establishment in religion or government. The sub-committee immediately issued a plan for assembling in Dublin a body of delegates from all parts of the kingdom, to assist, by their advice and influence, the measures adopted by the committee.

Declaration of
the Roman
Catholics.
March 17.

These publications, with subsequent proceedings and declarations, gave great alarm. The proposed delegation was by the friends of government termed a popish congress, convened to coerce and overawe the Legislature. At the summer assizes, the Grand Juries in many counties† expressed their opinions, in terms most forcible, against the claims of the Roman Catholics, and the manner and intent of their combination. The corporation of Dublin and other corporations

Alarm of the
Protestants.

* T. Moore's Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. i. p. 203.

† Particularly Leitrim, Cork, Roscommon, Sligo, Donegal, Fermanagh, Derry, Louth, Meath, and Mayo.

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avowed similar opinions; but counter-declarations were issued from meetings* in various places; and it was asserted that, as the Grand Juries, if not packed and selected for the purpose of obtaining their declarations, were at least so much governed by Mr. Foster, the Speaker of the House of Commons, who was foreman at Louth, and other persons, that their decisions were of no intrinsic value†.

Some of the most respectable Roman Catholics, and their bishops in particular, expressing alarm at a junction with the United Irishmen and their associates, missionaries from the Catholic committee travelled through the country, and persuaded many laymen and bishops, if they could not adopt their principles in every point, at least to acquiesce in their proceedings, as tending to an end of which they were all desirous‡.

Opinions of
counsel.

Mr. Simon Butler and Mr. Beresford Burton, who both enjoyed the rank of King's counsel, in a regular opinion, affirmed the legality of the intended measure, and their opinion had great weight. To repel the

* A judgment may be formed of the vehement tone of these publications from the specimen afforded by the metropolis. On the appearance of the Catholic resolutions, a post assembly of the corporation, held on the 11th September, voted an address to the Protestants, representing that the Roman Catholics were instructed to elect a representation of their own; to which they pretended that "the Protestants must bend." A century ago, on an appeal to Heaven, the Great Ruler of all things had decided in favour of our ancestors; he gave them victory, and Ireland became a Protestant nation, enjoying a British constitution. Were the Roman Catholics to attempt any interference in the government of the kingdom, it would be incompatible with the "Protestant ascendancy;" and, that no doubt might remain as to the construction of those words, it was further resolved that the Protestant Ascendancy consisted in a Protestant king of Ireland, a Protestant hierarchy, Protestant electors and government, the benches of justice, the army, and the revenue, through all their branches and details, Protestant; and this system supported by a connexion with the Protestant realm of Britain. After some time (31st October), a meeting of Roman Catholics was called, in which all the opinions in the declaration of the corporation were controverted; what they styled an appeal to Heaven was denounced as an appeal to hell; the Treaty of Limerick was cited, all the complaints of the Roman Catholics were recapitulated; and while they declared that they would never seek emancipation by force, they solemnly and publicly avowed that they never would, through any change of time or circumstance, save the actual restoration of their rights, desist from the peaceable and lawful pursuit of the two great objects of their hopes: the right of elective franchise and an equal share in the benefits of the trial by jury.—Proceedings of the Catholic Meeting, published by H. Fitzpatrick.

† See Plowden, vol. ii. p. 373 et seqq. T. W. Tone, vol. i. p. 65, and a pamphlet entitled *A Vindication of the Conduct and Principles of the Catholics of Ireland against the Charges made against them by certain late Grand Juries and other interested Bodies.*

‡ T. W. Tone, vol. i. pp. 55, 66.

objection that the Catholic committee was not commissioned by the body they assumed to represent, and were men without property, the new delegates were to be selected by the members of their communion in every part of the kingdom, and individuals possessing certain estates were permitted, with no other qualification, to take seats among them.

A new military body, styled, in imitation of the the French, the national guard, or first national battalion, was arrayed and disciplined in Dublin. They wore green uniforms, with buttons engraved with a harp under a cap of liberty mounted on a pike, instead of a crown. Their leaders were Archibald Hamilton Rowan and James Napper Tandy: they affected to address each other by the appellation of citizen: they were in high favour with the populace, and always cordially greeted as they appeared in the streets or on parade. Several bodies of men were collected in different parts of the north, armed and disciplined under officers chosen by themselves, and composed mostly of the lowest classes of the people. They were daily increasing in numbers, and exerted their best endeavours to procure military men of experience to act as officers. Stands of arms, and gunpowder to a large amount, much above the common consumption, were sent to Belfast and Newry, and orders given for a still greater quantity, which, it appeared, could be required only for military operations. At Belfast, bodies of men in arms were drilled and exercised for several hours, almost every night, by candle light, and ineffectual attempts had been made to seduce the soldiery. The declared object of these military bodies was to procure a reform of Parliament; but it was the obvious intention of most of them to overawe the Parliament and the Government, and dictate to both. The national guards and all the volunteer corps of Dublin were summoned, with the appellation, affectively Gallic, of "citizen soldier," for Sunday, the ninth of December, 1792, to celebrate the victories of the French and the triumph of universal liberty; but a proclamation was issued for dispersing all unlawful

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New committee.

National guard
formed.

Meeting
intended.

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Prevented by a
Proclamation.
December 3.
Sitting of the
Delegates.

meetings and preventing seditious associations. The national guards did not assemble; and the only persons who appeared on parade were Mr. Rowan, Mr. Tandy, and one Carey, a printer.

Such was the state of things when the Roman Catholic delegates commenced their sittings at the Tailor's Hall, from the locality of which they acquired the derisive appellation of the "Back Lane Parliament." "The last Catholic assembly which Ireland had seen," Mr. Wolfe Tone observes, "was the Parliament summoned by James the Second in 1688; a body of men whose wisdom, spirit, and patriotism reflect no discredit on their country or their sect. The patriots of the present day found their best claim to public regard on maintaining principles first advanced by an assembly to whose merits no historian has yet ventured to do justice; but whose memory, when passion and prejudice are no more, will be perpetuated in the hearts of their grateful countrymen*." But although the delegates felt, or at least expressed, the firmest confidence in their numbers and the strength and justice of their cause, they were not so sure of unanimity among themselves, and were fully aware of the strength to which they were opposed. Some, who proposed a modified claim of indulgences, were overruled by orators more impetuous, who insisted, as matter of right, on a total extinction of every difference between them and the Protestants.

Petition the
King.

They knew the zeal, the boldness, and the perseverance of their supporters in Parliament; but, instead of an application to that body, resolved on a petition to the King in person, and deputed five of their members to be the bearers†. They did not adopt this measure without ample reasons for believing that several of the British ministers were well disposed to their cause; and to the King they did the justice to acknowledge, that, in his reign, and with his cordial

* T. W. Tone, vol. i. p. 75.

† Sir Thomas French, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Keogh, Mr. Devereux, and Mr. Bellew.

assent, the members of their persuasion had acquired all their present advantages. Still this direct application to the throne met with no inconsiderable opposition; and each side of the question was argued with great heat and obstinacy*. The petition contained an assertion of the uninterrupted loyalty of the Catholics during a century, and recapitulated the restraints and disabilities to which they were still subjected in the military and naval service and in many other particulars, reiterated complaints of the infraction of the treaty of Limerick, and prayed that the King would recommend to the Parliament of Ireland to take their sufferings into consideration; and, by restoring them to the rights and privileges of the constitution, make them more worthy, as well as more capable, of rendering that service which was not less their duty than their inclination to afford.

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Passing through the country, to take ship at Donaghadee, the delegates were received in all parts with fervid acclamations of "Success attend you!"—"Union!" "Equal laws!"—"Down with the ascendancy!"—the horses were taken from their carriages, and they were drawn by the people†. On their arrival in London, they met with great courtesy from Mr. Dundas; he introduced them to the King, by whom their petition was most graciously received. On their return to Dublin, the Roman Catholic body, delighted with the report of their reception, voted a sum of two thousand pounds for erecting a statue to their most gracious sovereign, George the Third, as a monument of their gratitude for the important privileges which they had obtained from Parliament through his paternal recommendation.

Progress and
reception of
the delegates.

1793.
January 2.

At this period, the situation of the Irish government was peculiarly alarming and difficult. Had the claims of the Catholics stood unconnected with any other political object, they would have presented sufficient grounds of uneasiness; but when it was avowed

Situation of
government.

* For a detail of the arguments on both sides, see *Brief Account of the General Meeting of the Delegates*, by a Delegate, p. 5.

† *Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. i. p. 209.

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1793.

16th.
Formation and
proceedings of
new societies.

January 7.

that the mere removal of some social disabilities was not alone contemplated, but that, under the notion of a reform in Parliament, and by changing the rules of municipal corporations, all the powers of the state must, in effect, be surrendered to them, and that a party, always claiming supremacy and always peculiarly hostile to the church of England, must gain the means of annihilating that church, and finally of dedicating the country to another establishment, they saw with painful emotions the progress of these efforts. A society, styling themselves Friends of the Constitution, Liberty, and Peace, headed by the Duke of Leinster, issued an address, noticing "the corrupt mist and un-constitutional influence which debauched Parliament from its constitution;" and the people, cautioned indeed against the dangers of anarchy, were incited to assemble in their respective counties, for the purpose of investigation and conference; to declare their sense of the necessity of an immediate, radical, and effectual reform in the representation of the people. "We must strengthen," it said, "the sincere, and animate the luke-warm; and, above all, we must deprecate half-measures, and let the government know that no palliative will be suffered to feed and keep alive the present morbid system of representation." The Freemasons of the county of Tyrone, slighting their fundamental principle, that religion and politics were never to enter into their discussions, held a meeting of a committee at Dungannon, where resolutions were passed, expressing their love of the volunteers, their equal detestation of the mendicant patriotism of the timid and interested, and the violence of the turbulent and licentious; and their determination to act with spirited firmness in obtaining universal emancipation and equal representation; and they expressed great sympathy with the proprietors of the Northern Star, who, they said, had been persecuted by the arbitrary exercise of legal corruption for their exertions to promote the public good. The press, without reserve or restraint, applauded and exulted in the sentiments and successes of the French; the Defenders continued their lawless

ravages and ferocious barbarities in many parts of the kingdom; and although it was strenuously, and probably truly, denied, many believed that a portion of the money levied for the use of the Roman Catholic delegates was devoted to the service of this banditti*.

It was expected, nor was the anticipation falsified, that the session of Parliament would be contentious and stormy, although some particular proceedings indicated an approach to concord between the government and opposition. The speech of the Lord Lieutenant, expressing his Majesty's regret at attempts made to excite a spirit of discontent and disturbance, and at appearances of a design to effect by violence an alteration in the constitution, which, with the conduct of the French government, rendered necessary an augmentation of forces on the Irish establishment; recommended the adoption of measures for securing internal tranquillity, and a consideration of the situation of his Catholic subjects. On the motion for an address, Mr. Grattan concluded a speech, in which he enumerated and amplified the old grounds of discontent, and added several that were new, with an amendment, proposing some additional expressions, which did not materially vary the sense of the original.

As the amendment and the debate on it related principally to the Roman Catholics, Dr. Duigenan pledged himself to demonstrate that one third of their petition was composed of gross misrepresentation, and another of rank and notorious falsehood: and if the Sovereign had been misled by it into an opinion too favourable to the interests and views of the Roman Catholics, he would, when the question came to be regularly debated, expose its deception and want of truth. Mr. Grattan withdrew his amendment until

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Session of
Parliament

January 10.
Speech of the
Lord Lieute-
nant.

Amendment
moved by Mr.
Grattan.

Dr. Duigenan.

11th.

* Seward's Collectanea, vol. ii. p. 335, et seqq. Plowden, vol. ii. p. 389. Some proceedings of the Catholic societies in Dublin shewed a spirit not incompatible with the acts of the Defenders, which they disavowed. In one of their fullest meetings, it was moved that the effigy of Lord Kenmare should be carried in solemn procession through the streets, attended by Roman Catholics, and burnt on a gibbet; and, amidst a numerous multitude, the negative was carried by a majority of two only. By the same body it was decreed, that, under a new government, the whole county of Kerry, which had taken no part in their proceedings, should for ever be excluded from all legislative power. Presbyterianism; a Letter to the real Roman Catholics of Ireland, p. 67.

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the report should be made; it was then reproduced and adopted.

1793.

Motion on
Parliamentary
reform.

14th.

Although the question of Parliamentary reform was considered as consequential to that of Catholic emancipation, it obtained a priority in discussion. At the earliest possible moment, Mr. William Brabazon Ponsonby cautiously introduced the subject. "I to- tally disapprove," he said, "of the wild and mis- chievous doctrines which have of late found their way into this country; I dislike republican prin- ciples; I detest republics; because, from all the knowledge which I have been able to acquire, I am satisfied that they are unfavourable to rational li- berty." Mr. Grattan, hailing with transport these sentiments, moved for a committee to inquire whether any, and what, abuses had taken place in the consti- tution of government, and to report temperate means of redress. An amendment, proposed by Mr. Corry, confining the inquiry to the state of representation, and excluding abuses and remedies, was adopted, with the acquiescence of Mr. Grattan.

15th.
Alien bill.

Their success in obtaining this reference elated the spirit of opposition; they thought, or at least promul- gated the notion, that government would make very large concessions; and when an alien bill was intro- duced, it was not resisted, as in England; but Mr. Forbes, Mr. Grattan, and Mr. Curran, gave it their unqualified approbation. A similar unanimity pre- vailed on a proposition to relieve the poorer classes of householders from the pressure of the hearth tax. It extracted from an opposition member an observa- tion, that in six days the house had done more to tran- quillize the nation and insure its confidence, than had ever been effected in a similar period.

16th.
Hearth tax
repealed.

Mr. Grattan
on reform of
Parliament.

February 9.

Still government was not prepared to adopt, in all their extent, the extravagant plans which had been rendered popular. In a committee, Mr. Grattan pro- posed three resolutions, of which he moved only the first—That the representation of the people was at- tended with heavy charges in the election and return of members, which were abuses, and ought to be abo-

lished. In an eloquent speech, he enumerated the evils of corrupt representation, and required the abolition of patronage boroughs, and an oath from every member, on his return, that he had not, by himself or others, been at any expense to procure his election. The Chancellor of the Exchequer met the motion with an amendment, declaring that, under the present system, the privileges of the people, the trade and the prosperity of the country, had greatly increased, and that if any plan were produced, likely, without hazard, to increase those advantages, it ought to be taken into serious consideration. After a spirited and eloquent debate, the amendment was carried by a great majority*.

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Mr. Forbes next required that all returning officers of boroughs should lay before the house lists of electors and their qualifications. This motion was rejected†, after a long debate, in the course of which, Sir Boyle Roche treated Parliamentary reform as a masked battery, under the covert of which the Dungannon reformers, the United Irishmen, the Defenders, and the Peep-of-day Boys, were advancing to the foot of the glacis of the citadel of the constitution, to make a lodgment; and the garrison was called upon to defend itself. The members on the other side, both in this and the former debates, disclaimed all association with the parties, or participation in the principles alluded to; all coincidence in opinion with Thomas Paine was denied; he was characterized as a hired agent of the French. These debates may be considered as decisive of the question of reform for this time. At a later period of the session, Mr. Grattan brought in a bill on the subject; but, after a little progress had been made, it failed.

19th.
Mr. Forbes's
motion.

Rejected.

From the Roman Catholic bishops, and many members of their church, a petition was presented, praying for a consideration of their case, in conformity with the benign wishes of his Majesty. Mr. Hobart, secretary of state, moved to bring in a bill for their relief; and Sir Hercules Langrishe, in seconding the

February 4
Catholic relief.

* 153 to 71.

† 137 to 48.

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motion, said, "You cannot give them a single benefit that will not be an additional pledge of their affection, and hostage for their fidelity. Give them the pride of privilege, and you will give them the principle of attachment; admit them within the walls of the constitution, and they will defend them."

Dr. Duigenan.

Consistently with his engagement, Dr. Duigenan, in a long and argumentative speech, analyzed the petition to the King, republished by the Catholic committee, for the purpose of the present proceeding, affirming that, in every page, and almost in every line, it teemed with misrepresentation or falsehood. By copious historical citations, he proved that, far from having persevered in unchanged loyalty for a whole century, there had not been a rebellion or a foreign war in which large bodies of them had not entered the service of the enemy; and, by arguments founded on law and policy, he controverted and shewed the danger of acceding to their claims. Many members spoke in answer, and leave to bring in the bill was given, with only two dissentient voices*. In its passage through the House of Commons, it occasioned several earnest debates, and divisions took place on amendments moved on particular clauses: the principle of the bill was acceded to on all hands, and it passed into a law.

Bill passed.

April 9.
Its provisions.

It revoked all penalties and disabilities affecting persons professing or educating their children in the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, and repealed the laws relative to the requiring limitation, charging, or discovering of their estates and property, different from those affecting Protestants. In voting for members of Parliament, they were required simply to take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration; but they were not enabled to hold offices or places of trust under the Crown, to vote in vestries on questions relating to the

* Mr. Plowden, himself a Roman Catholic, says (History, vol. ii. p. 408)—"Dr. Duigenan, in a very long and elaborate speech, collected together whatever the acrimonious bigotry of former days had suggested against the Catholics, and retailed it with new and enthusiastic bitterness." The speech at large, published as a pamphlet, and in the Irish Parliamentary Debates, vol. xiii. p. 94 to 135, well deserves consideration; and many of its topics are ably advanced in a speech of Lord Chancellor Fitzgibbon, on the 10th of January, 1793.

raising of money for repair of churches, the demise of church lands, or the appointment of parish clerks or churchwardens. They were also still restrained from having or keeping arms in their houses, unless possessed of a freehold estate of the annual value of one hundred pounds, or personal property to the amount of one thousand. Those who had freehold of the yearly amount of ten pounds, or personal estate to the value of three hundred pounds, could only acquire the privilege by subscribing an affidavit to that effect, and taking the oath of allegiance, to be inrolled by the clerk of the peace. They might hold civil and military offices, except a small number specified in the Act*, and take degrees, or become professors, masters or fellows of any college, being a member of the University of Dublin, and not established exclusively for the education of Papists. They were to abjure, as unchristian and impious, the principle that it is lawful to murder, destroy, or injure any person for being a heretic; to deny that any immoral or wicked act could be justified under pretence that it was done for the good of the church, or in obedience to ecclesiastical power; to deny the infallibility of the Pope; to defend the settlement of property established by the existing laws; to disavow all intention to subvert the present church establishment; and to maintain the Protestant religion and government. The statute contained some further regulations, preventing Roman Catholics from presenting to ecclesiastical benefices, and their priests from celebrating marriages between Papist and Protestant, unless the ceremony had first been performed by a Protestant clergyman†.

* They were, Lord Lieutenant, or chief governor, lord chancellor, or keeper or commissioner of the great seal; chief or puisne judge, in either of the common law courts, or admiralty; master of the rolls; secretary of state; keeper of the privy seal; vice or deputy vice-treasurer; teller or cashier of the exchequer, or auditor general; lieutenant or governor, or custos rotulorum, of a county; secretary to lord lieutenant; member of the privy council; prime, or second, or third serjeant at law; attorney or solicitor general; king's counsel; master in chancery; provost or Fellow of Dublin University; post master general; master and lieutenant general of the ordnance; and sheriff or sub-sheriff of any county.—s. 9.

† 33d Geo. III. c. 21. Irish Statutes. Also Irish Debates, vol. xiii p. 199. Plowden, vol. ii. p. 421.

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XCII.1798.
Other Acts.

Some other bills of a popular and conciliatory nature were also passed. One excluded from the House of Commons persons holding certain places under government and in the revenue, if duty required their absence from the metropolis; and all who enjoyed pensions for years, or during the King's pleasure; and the pensions were reduced from a hundred and twenty thousand pounds to eighty thousand. Warrants for the disposal of public money could no longer be issued without the signature and consequent responsibility of the proper officers in the Irish administration. Trade to India was permitted under specified restrictions; encouragement was given for the improvement of barren land; and a bill was passed for the removal of the doubts of juries in cases of libel. An indemnity was granted to the Bank for the security of a loan they had engaged in, under circumstances similar to those which occasioned the measure for commercial relief in England; but an attempt made by Mr. Grattan to alter the constitution of the Dublin police failed.

Address on
the war.February 16.
Militia regulated.Debate on the
late proclamation.

January 31.

Conduct of
Lord Edward
Fitzgerald.

To the message announcing a war with France, a loyal answer was unanimously returned: acts for regulating the militia on a plan resembling that in England and for preventing traitorous intercourse with France were passed with facility.

Such were the amicable or, at least, tranquil proceedings of the session. At an early period, an address of approbation and thanks to the Lord-Lieutenant, for the proclamation for dispersing unlawful assemblies, was moved. Mr. Grattan approved the proclamation, because it did not propose to disperse the national guards or the volunteers; and, after a few more observations, the debate would probably have terminated in general acquiescence but for an unexpected display of puerile petulance. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, without a word of observation on the merits of the question or of appeal to the reason or judgment of the House, in a vehement tone, exclaimed, "I give my most hearty disapprobation to that address; for I do think that the Lord-Lieutenant and the majority of this House are the worst subjects

"the King has." A loud cry of "to the bar," and "take down his words," issued from all quarters; the house was cleared, and the offender was not re-admitted for nearly three hours. He offered an explanation, which was deemed unsatisfactory; and the following day, being again brought to the bar in custody and strangers again excluded, finally, not without much opposition, his explanation was accepted*. The address was voted unanimously.

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As a precaution against the movements of insurgents, an act was passed to prevent the importation of arms, gunpowder, and ammunition, and the removing and keeping of them without licence. It was to be in force only until the first of January 1794, and the end of the then next session of Parliament. The Attorney-General stated, that large quantities of gunpowder and fire-arms had been clandestinely imported and seized; in the course of their secret conveyance into the interior. This fact was not denied at the time, nor was the measure opposed; although those who piqued themselves as being guardians of public rights, five years afterward, described it as part of a general scheme for irritating and enslaving the people†.

February 5.
Act against
importation of
arms.

At the commencement of the session, the House of Lords appointed a secret committee to inquire into the causes of prevailing disorders and disturbances, and the means of preventing their extension. Their report was, that the people called Defenders were very different from those who had originally assumed that appellation, and were all of the Roman Catholic persuasion; in general poor, ignorant labouring men, sworn to secrecy, and impressed with an opinion that they were assisting the Catholic cause. In other respects, they did not appear to have any distinct, particular object in view; but they talked of being relieved from hearth-money, tithes, county cesses, and of lowering their rents. They first appeared in the

Committee of
the Lords.

Report on
Defenders.

* There was a division, in which fifty-five members declared that it was not satisfactory; but one hundred and thirty-five were of a contrary opinion.—*Irish Debates*, vol. xiii pp. 82, 83. *Plowden*, vol. ii. p. 404. *Musgrave*, vol. i p. 141, and *Moore's Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. i p. 212.

† *Plowden*, vol. ii. page 427, n.

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county of Louth; in April, their numbers were considerable; several were armed; they assembled mostly in the night, broke into the houses of Protestants and took their arms. These disorders soon spread through the counties of Meath, Cavan, Monaghan, and parts adjacent. At first, the insurgents took arms alone, but afterwards, every kind of property. Their measures appeared to have been concerted and conducted with secrecy, regularity, and system, as if directed by men of superior rank. Considerable sums of money had been, and still continued to be, levied on the Roman Catholics, by subscriptions and collections at chapels and elsewhere, throughout the kingdom, under the authority of a printed circular. Seditious and inflammatory papers, issued from Dublin, seemed to have countenanced and encouraged these proceedings; and, at a considerable expense, an agent and counsel were retained for the Defenders in the county of Louth: but the committee acquitted the body of the Roman Catholics from the charge of promoting or countenancing such disturbances, or being privy to the misapplication of money*.

Numerous acts of the disaffected appeared to sustain the truth of this report and justify the apprehension of danger. Beside meetings in various towns and districts in the counties of Down and Antrim, where inflammatory doctrines were promulgated and incendiary resolutions passed, a provincial meeting was held at Dungannon, to which most of the parishes in Ulster sent delegates. After much violent declamation, fif-

February 16.
Meeting at
Dungannon.

* From Plowden, vol. ii. page 288, et seqq. The Society of United Irishmen in Dublin, the Honourable Simon Butler in the chair, Oliver Bond secretary, published some severe animadversions on the powers which the committee assumed in making this report; and in doing so were guilty of a gross libel and a violation of privilege; for which they were committed to Newgate by the House of Lords, and fined £500 each. While in prison, they were maintained in the following manner by the members of the society: They made four hundred tickets, of which a certain number were blanks, the remainder were marked with the dates of the days that the prisoners were to remain in confinement; and any person who drew one of the latter was obliged to provide a dinner, with twelve covers, on the day specified in it. Four persons were invited by each of the prisoners, and three by the person who procured the repast, who, with himself, made twelve. The heavy expense attending this scheme contributed to damp the ardour of the society, and induced some members to secede from it. —Musgrave's Memoirs of the Rebellion, vol. i. page 129.

teen resolutions were voted, severely reprobating the measures of government; and a standing committee was appointed to concert measures for a national convention, to meet in the following September at Athlone. Their sentiments were warmly adopted by the volunteers, some of whom declared that they would never part with their arms but with their lives. The Defenders continued their ravages in many counties; and the United Irishmen sent emissaries and dispersed inflammatory publications in every direction*.

Under these circumstances, the Lord Chancellor brought in a bill to prevent the election or appointment of delegates to unlawful assemblies, under pretence of preparing or presenting public petitions or other addresses to the King or Parliament. In the House of Commons, Mr. Grattan disputed the law laid down in the preamble, deprecated the invasion of a general right in the subject to meet, either personally or by deputy, to consider, denounce, or petition against injuries or grievances; and cited numerous instances, both in remote and recent times, of conventions assembled and delegates appointed, not only without impediment, but with most beneficial results; and he endeavoured to destroy the bill by moving a second reading in the month of September. The Attorney-General, answering these arguments, stated the law as it stood, and the effect of the intended enactment; and Mr. Grattan's motion was rejected†. On that for going into a committee, Mr. Grattan, not denying the intended convention at Athlone, treated the mention of it as a trick, making it a pretext for preventing delegates for ever, and proposed a clause limiting the duration of the act. The obvious answer was given, that by doing so, it would be declared that all conventions, after the expiration of the limited period, would be legal. The amendment being negatived without a division, the bill passed; and, at a very advanced period, the session closed.

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Bill against
unlawful
assemblies.

July 16.
Opposed.

18th.

19th passes.

During the progress of the bill for their relief, the sub-committee of the Roman Catholics had interviews

Further efforts
of the Roman
Catholics.

* Musgrave, vol. i. page 150.

† 128 to 27.

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with the Secretary of State. Some of their body felt that all the specific complaints advanced in their petition were removed; but that, considering the extent of the prayer of their constituents, they would be deserting their duty, did they accede to any measure which proffered less than a total relief. When the act had passed, objections to the clauses which excluded them from certain situations and employments were strenuously urged. It was true that no members of their body could, for the present, hope for the appointment of chief governor, or many others in the law and in the state, which were mentioned in the act; but still their exclusion was a perpetuated insult. The office of sheriff and some others, which they were forbidden to occupy, they designated as stations of which they could not be deprived without feeling injured as well as affronted*. The admitted excellence of the laws passed during the late session procured no popularity to the administration. The leading measures of grace which affected the great bulk of the people were attributed to the personal interference of a benign and fatherly Sovereign, over the heads and against the wishes of those who, in the preceding year, had rejected their application for smaller favours.

Difficulties
with the
militia,

and corpora-
tions.

Increasing
disorders.

Great difficulties at first prevailed in raising the regiments of militia; for, although Catholics were rendered capable of serving, no officers of their persuasion were appointed. This marked distinction diffused a general distrust; and it was found necessary to appoint officers of that persuasion before the corps could be completed. In the guild of merchants of Dublin, the petitions of Catholic merchants for admission were rejected, after vehement debates. Similar feelings being displayed in other parts of the kingdom, the dissatisfied party, while they made strong protestations of respect to the laws, and gratitude and affection to a Sovereign, to whom, of all who ever sat upon the throne, they were most indebted, diminished the credit desired for these professions, by the daily and increasing violences of the desperate and ferocious bands of

* Wolfe Tone, vol. i. page 92.

Defenders. These ruffians committed depredations without control: in their nocturnal trainings to learn the use of arms, they were instructed by captains selected from the most infamous individuals of the community; generally the proscribed objects of civil or military law. As their necessities multiplied, they indulged in all sorts of crimes; threatened to cut off heads, to burn and to destroy wherever enmity appeared, or opposition was made to them.

Society became insecure: a meeting was held at Navan, in the county of Meath, subscriptions were entered into, and rewards offered for the discovery and prosecution of offenders, with such effect that, with the aid of the military, an appearance of tranquillity was restored, but not until the insurgents had shewn themselves in a sort of martial array, and resisted the military at Athlone. All legal efforts were made to deprive of arms those who were not entitled to possess them; but the Reverend Mr. Butler, chaplain to the Bishop of Meath, a magistrate who had exerted himself with firmness and spirit in bringing some of these miscreants to justice, was murdered by an assassin, who shot him from behind a hedge.

To clear themselves from the imputation of being associated with the United Irishmen, the Defenders, French levellers, and sworn foes to the constitution, the Roman Catholic bishops transmitted to the Lord Lieutenant, and through him to the King, an address, expressive of their unshaken loyalty and grateful affection to his Majesty's person and government, and distinctly repudiating all the offences with which they were charged; it was most graciously received*.

A session of Parliament, unusually short, produced nothing worthy of notice at the time, except a discussion on a bill for the reform of Parliament, brought in by Mr. William Brabazon Ponsonby, and which was rejected on the motion for a second reading†. In closing the session, the Lord Lieutenant observed

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Counter-
actions.

Murder of
Mr. Butler.

Oct. 25.
Addresses of
the Roman
Catholic
bishops.

Dec. 17.

1794.

Jan. 21.
Parliament.
March 4.

Mr Brabazon
Ponsonby's
bill for
reform.

* See the address, together with one to the Lord Lieutenant, and answer. Plowden, vol. ii. p. 443.

† 142 to 44.

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25th.
Speech of the
Lord
Lieutenant.Violence and
disorder
increase.

Feb. 14.

Resistance.

Address of
Hamilton
Rowan.

with regret, that in some parts of the county of Cork, bodies of the people, deluded by the artifices of wicked and designing men, had assembled and compelled many to take unlawful oaths. The magistrates, aided by the military, had nearly suppressed those disturbances, and he trusted that members, in their respective counties, would enforce obedience to the laws, and inculcate a spirit of loyalty to the King and attachment to the constitution.

It was evident that neither forbearance on the part of government, nor concession to the Roman Catholics, could tranquillize the rage of sedition and violence; defenderism spread rapidly, the Right Boys gained confidence, and became systematic in their outrages, and the United Irishmen assumed an unwonted tone of political language. A numerous body of the Right Boys assembled near Bandon, and made several persons swear that they would not pay tithes, taxes, or hearth money. They even threatened to attack the town; and, in the next month, dispersed a body of police-men, called out by a magistrate; at another time they attacked a party of the Carlow militia, and wounded a magistrate, while reading the riot act. The Defenders became daily more numerous, and extended their depredations into the counties of Dublin, Kildare, Westmeath, Longford, Cavan, Leitrim, and a part of Down. Renouncing their original principle of defence, they became outrageous aggressors; still under the pretence of searching for arms in self-defence. Their nocturnal visits were terrific: they not only plundered houses of arms, money, and valuable effects, but frequently committed savage outrages on the inhabitants. In the county of Longford, and elsewhere, the nobility, clergy, and freeholders united, and obtained permission to levy money by subscription for raising and maintaining a body of horse for their defence. Meetings and resolutions of a similar tendency became frequent, and were attended with happy effects.

In hopes to impede, if he could not arrest, the torrent of sedition, the Attorney-General filed a criminal information against Mr. Hamilton Rowan, for a libel

which, as secretary to the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin, he had issued in the form of an address from that body to the volunteers, in consequence of the proclamation against seditious meetings. They were styled citizen soldiers, exhorted to declare that they would cry aloud, even amidst the storm raised by the witchcraft of a proclamation; told that to the formation of the volunteers was owing the peace and protection of that island; from their relaxation had ensued its relapse into impotence and insignificance; from their renovation must be derived its future freedom and present tranquillity: they were therefore summoned to arms, to preserve their country in that guarded quiet which might secure it from external hostility, and to maintain that internal regimen throughout the land, which, superseding a notorious police or a suspected militia, might preserve the blessings of peace by a vigilant preparation for war. All the complaints and grievances of the day were recapitulated, and the remedies of Catholic emancipation and universal suffrage strongly enforced; for the attainment of which, delegations from every parish were required to assemble, that the spirit of the north might become the spirit of the nation. "In the sincerity of our souls," it said, "do we desire Catholic emancipation: but were it obtained to-morrow, to-morrow would we go on as we do to-day; in the pursuit of that reform, which would still be wanting to ratify their liberties as well as our own."

This address was issued before the session of 1793; a criminal information was speedily filed; but, from inevitable causes, the trial was deferred more than a year. The defendant was found guilty, and sentenced to pay a fine of £500, and be imprisoned two years.

While Mr. Rowan was yet in Newgate, in pursuance of his sentence, the Reverend William Jackson, a clergyman, who had long acquired an infamous notoriety in England, was put on his trial in Dublin for high treason, in maintaining a traitorous correspondence with the French, in conjunction with Wolfe Tone, William Stone, and some others. The intent

Prosecuted.

Jan. 29.

Sentence.

June 2.
Prosecution
of Mr. Jackson
for high
treason.

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He is con-
victed,
and commits
suicide.Danger of
Hamilton
Rowan,who escapes
to France.Earl
Fitzwilliam
intended for
Lord
Lieutenant.Measures
confided to
him.

was to persuade the French government that an invasion of Ireland would produce her total separation from Great Britain. On evidence too cogent to be resisted, he was found guilty, but anticipated the judgment of the law; he swallowed poison, and fell dead in the court. He came to Ireland, accompanied by an attorney of most disreputable character, who pretended to be his friend, but was a spy upon his actions, having made previous communications to ministers. They were introduced to Mr. Rowan in prison, and he made communications, and furnished papers, which would have placed his own life in the utmost peril; but he plotted and achieved an escape; and, although denounced by proclamation as a traitor, and large rewards offered for his apprehension, found refuge in France. His security, doubtless, was facilitated by his great popularity; on his trial, the carriage of Mr. Curran, his counsel, had been drawn through the streets by the people; the verdict against him was received with groans and yells; and, after his escape, individuals in the humble condition of boatmen, although apprized who he was, and not ignorant of the splendid recompense which awaited an act of treachery, resisted all temptations, braved a dangerous sea, and landed him in safety*.

Deeply affected by the state of affairs in Ireland, and sensible how necessary it was to conciliate discordant factions, or, at least, to prevent those explosions which were menacing to the very existence of the state, the government of England determined to attempt some alterations which might afford general satisfaction. It is said that, as a condition of accepting office, the general management and superintendence of Ireland were offered to the Duke of Portland, and that Earl Fitzwilliam was to be Lord Lieutenant, with the intent that certain arrangements with respect to persons in office should take place, and that certain popular requirements should be granted. His lordship was not directed to give rise to, or bring forward, the

* Howell's State Trials, vol. xxii. p. 1186; and for some particulars concerning Mr. Jackson and Mr. Cockayne, T. W. Tone, vol. i. pp. 111, 115.

question of Catholic emancipation on the part of government; but he made a distinct declaration, that, if brought forward, it should meet his full support*. It was known in Ireland, some time before it was effected, that Earl Fitzwilliam would be substituted for the Earl of Westmoreland; and, probably, the intentions of the new chief governor were more fully disclosed to, or more accurately divined by, the Roman Catholics of Ireland than by the cabinet of Saint James's. From the effect of the Convention Act, delegations no longer existed; but meetings of individuals became more numerous than before; their differences of opinion were adjusted or suppressed, and, when assured of the intended change in government, they resolved to petition Parliament, in the approaching session, for a total repeal of the penal and restrictive laws still affecting them; to recommend similar petitions to all the Roman Catholics of Ireland; to confide their interests to the care of Mr. Grattan; and that their committee should prepare an address to be presented to the new Lord Lieutenant on his arrival.

Independently of the changes he was expected to accomplish, Earl Fitzwilliam had great claims to the favour of the Irish people. He had extensive estates, and was a kind landlord and benevolent patron; while, as the successor and personal representative of the Marquis of Rockingham, many endearing and interesting recollections were attached to his name. His coming was hailed with general acclamations; congratulatory addresses were presented from every county, and almost every town. The Roman Catholics of Dublin, in a stately procession from the rotunda, repaired to the castle, to offer the address prepared by their committee, which, beside general professions of gratitude and loyalty to the King, disclosed expectation that those men who had, on all great occasions, appeared the most powerful supporters of the interest of their country, and to whose exertions the Catholics of Ireland were so peculiarly indebted, would stand

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Proceedings of
the Roman
Catholics.

Dec. 23.

His arrival.

1795.
Jan. 4.
Addresses
and answers.

* Such was his lordship's own statement, in a debate in the House of Lords, 19th March, 1799. Parliamentary History, vol. xxxiv p. 672.

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foremost in his Excellency's confidence. In his answer, the Lord Lieutenant said, "In the faithful discharge of my duty, it shall be my study to call to my coun-
cils those who are distinguished and known for their wisdom, their integrity, and their talents; and who possess the confidence of the people. Assisted by their advice, and availing myself of their support, I trust that I shall be enabled to promote the first wishes of his Majesty's heart, by securing the full and cordial union of all his subjects, as the best means of assuring their happiness*."

22nd.
Speech on
opening
Parliament.

On the meeting of Parliament, the only allusion in the speech from the throne, relating to the Roman Catholics, was, a reference to the great advantages derived from the Protestant charter schools; they had hitherto been but partial, and it was hoped that the wisdom of Parliament would order every thing relating to education in the manner most beneficial, and best adapted to the occasions of all descriptions of men.

Mr. Grattan
moves the
Address.
24th.
He presents
the Catholic
petition.
Other peti-
tions.
28th to
Feb. 11.

Mr. Grattan, who moved the address, was equally abstemious; but he soon presented the petition of the Roman Catholics of Dublin, praying, according to their resolution, a repeal of all the penal and restrictive laws affecting them. Mr. Vandeleur produced one from the county of Clare; and, for many succeeding days, the petitions from counties and towns were received.

12th.
Bill brought
in.

Mr. Grattan then moved for leave to bring in a bill to the effect prayed, without the usual previous form of referring the petitions to a committee. Dr. Duigenan, Colonel Blaquiere, and Mr. Ogle, in vain remonstrated against this precipitancy; the motion was carried without any other opponent. The bill was not of great length, and its import may be conveyed in a few words. It enumerated all the exceptions of every kind, relating to oaths, arms, election qualifications, offices, and even votes at vestries on the appointment of churchwardens, and abolished them all.

* See the Address and Answer in Seward's Collectanea, vol. iii. p. 122.

It could not be doubted that this measure was thus eagerly pressed forward to accomplish some political design ; or that it should have existed without the knowledge and encouragement of the Lord Lieutenant, and received, what he afterwards said he had promised, his full support ; but the English ministers, when apprized of this vehement activity, took all means in their power to repress it. The Earl's own account of the matter is, that having always been of opinion that sound policy, as well as justice, required the removal of the remaining disqualifications, and finding the Duke of Portland, and the whole cabinet, with Mr. Pitt at their head, strongly impressed with the same conviction, he had undertaken the high office, which otherwise he would have refused. He consented not to agitate the question as a ministerial measure, but rather endeavour to keep it back until a period of more general tranquillity ; but it was, at the same time, resolved, that if the Catholics should appear determined to bring the business before Parliament, he would give it a handsome support on the part of government. On his landing, he became convinced that the question would force itself on his immediate consideration ; he had interviews with the leading Catholics, and transmitted information on several occasions, distinctly declaring his opinion, that not to " grant cheerfully all they " wished for, would not only be exceedingly im-
" litic, but, perhaps, dangerous ; that no time was
" to be lost, that the business would be presently at
" hand, that the first step he took would be of infinite
" importance, and that, if he received no peremptory
" instructions to the contrary, he should acquiesce in
" the time, the mode of proceeding, and the extent of
" the demands."

Before this letter was written, the noble Earl had made many changes in various departments ; particularly by displacing Mr. Beresford, who had always been a strenuous supporter of government, and substituting Mr. George Ponsonby, a no less zealous partizan of opposition. Mr. Beresford came to London, and,

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1795.
Conduct of
Earl
Fitzwilliam.

Jan. 15.
Changes
effected by
him.

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1795.

His recall
foreseen.Feb. 26.
Anticipation
in the House
of Commons.Address
moved by
Lawrence
Parsons.His further
efforts.
March 2.

probably, his explanations had some effect in convincing ministers that, however they might desire to afford the Catholics all the relief they asked, the time and the manner of granting it were equally improper. From the correspondence which ensued, Lord Fitzwilliam could not fail to perceive that his recall was determined on; and he persuaded himself that the removal of Mr. Beresford, and some other persons, and not the Catholic question, was the cause*.

In the House of Commons, the dreaded event was animadverted on with great severity. Sir Lawrence Parsons mentioned it as a report, and, as no member of government offered any contradiction, treated it as a certainty, and as a dereliction of all those measures which were held out to the popular hope. He moved an address on the subject; in seconding which, Mr. Duquerry expressed himself with great asperity. Mr. Pitt, he said, not satisfied with having involved the empire in a disastrous war, intended now to complete the mischiefs of his inauspicious administration, by risking the internal peace of Ireland, making the friends of the country the dupes of his fraud and artifice, in order to swindle the nation out of £1,700,000 to support the war, on the faith of measures which it now seemed were to be refused. To the address, an unanimous assent was claimed; but, on the contrary, Mr. George Ponsonby having moved the order of the day, Sir Lawrence Parsons acquiesced, alleging that he had proceeded thus suddenly under apprehensions of an adjournment of the House, and the speedy departure of the noble Earl. As another mark of disapprobation, Sir Lawrence Parsons endeavoured to obstruct the supplies, by moving that they should be voted for two months only; his speech was so vehe-

* Chiefly from Lord Fitzwilliam's Two Letters to the Earl of Carlisle; these documents are, at least, authentic; many pamphlets appeared in answer: it is not necessary to estimate the weight of their reasoning; but as they are anonymous, and not pretended to be sanctioned by any known person, they are not to be quoted as declarations of fact, in opposition to the assertions of a nobleman of unblemished character. The letters are largely quoted by Mr. Plowden. *Hist.* vol. ii. p. 467, et seq.

ment, that the galleries were cleared; his motion was negatived by a great majority*; but a resolution was unanimously carried, that his Excellency, by his conduct, had merited the thanks of the House and the confidence of the people.

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A similar motion, made in the upper House by the Duke of Leinster, was opposed by Lord Dillon, the Marquis of Waterford, and some other Peers, who spoke with disapprobation of the Viceroy's measures. In the progress of the debate, the Duke angrily declared that if his motion were rejected, he would never open his lips in that House again; but an amendment, suggested by the Bishop of Ossory, limiting the expression of confidence to that House, and not extending it to the nation, which had no elected representatives there, was adopted.

5th.
Motion in the
House of
Lords.

Public assemblies were held, and resolutions and addresses voted, in various places, both by Roman Catholics and dissenters, expressive of their apprehensions of evil from the intended recall, and to Earl Fitzwilliam for his conduct. The Roman Catholics of Dublin, at a numerous meeting, on a report that the bill of total emancipation was, under the influence of the British cabinet, to be resisted, and, consequently, that the country was soon to be deprived of its present valuable and respected Viceroy, resolved that three of their body should present an address to the King in person, on the present momentous crisis; an address to Earl Fitzwilliam, expressive of their esteem, veneration, and anxiety; and one of gratitude to Mr. Grattan and the gentlemen who had supported his motion. The address to the King was graciously received; but the answer communicated by the Duke of Portland, as reported by the deputies, was, that his Majesty's pleasure on the subject of the Catholic claims was disclosed to the Lord Lieutenant, and that he was the proper channel through which it might be known.

Public
meetings.

Feb. 27.
Addresses
voted by the
Catholics.

March 13.

After the transaction of some other business, Parliament was adjourned for three weeks. This formed

March 24.
Parliament
adjourned.

* 146 to 24.

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25th.
Earl Fitzwil-
liam's depar-
ture.

the last act of Earl Fitzwilliam's government. He immediately returned to England, having received addresses from the freeholders of many counties, and from almost every corporate body in the kingdom. The day of his departure from Dublin was one of general gloom: the shops were shut; no business was transacted; and the whole city put on mourning. His coach was drawn to the water side by some of the most respectable citizens; and heartfelt sorrow appeared on every countenance. The Lord Primate and the Lord Chancellor were sworn lords justices, to fulfil for the present the functions of government*.

31st.
Arrival and
reception of
Lord Camden.Outrages of
the mob.

In a few days, Lord Camden arrived, to undertake this most unpleasant and ungracious office. The ordinary courtesies of reception were denied him, and traits of premature and causeless hatred were exhibited. The great officers of state, attending at the castle to pay their due respects, were insulted and maltreated; the Lord Chancellor was attacked by a gang of assassins, who, by repeated volleys of stones, broke the panels of his coach, gave his lordship a severe contusion in the forehead, and would have murdered him, but that the skill of his coachman and the speed of his horses enabled him to escape; and the Lord Primate was similarly assailed, but sustained no personal injury. These attacks bore every mark of premeditation and arrangement. A leader was observed and distinguished: from the Liberty, the lowest district of the city, a mob, divided into parties of about one hundred, distinguished by green cockades, rushed forth, with acclamations of "Liberty, equality, and no Lord Lieutenant!" assailed the house of the Speaker, and the new custom-house, where Mr. John Claudius Beresford resided, professing their resolution to extinguish (such was their phrase) those two obnoxious persons: they also attacked the dwelling of Alderman Warren, but fled precipitately when a resisting force appeared; so that the damage was smaller than might have been apprehended†.

* Seward's Collectanea, vol. iii. pp. 128, 139.

† Musgrave's History of the Rebellion, vol. i. p. 163. Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. p. 15.

To the day when Parliament reassembled, no efforts were omitted to keep up the prevailing spirit. The Roman Catholics, assuming to be the nation, proclaimed their wrongs and their resolutions; they held a meeting to receive the report of their delegates to London, at which the language of defiance and command alone was heard, and at which a body of students in the University of Dublin made their essay as political agitators and declaimers: they were complimented by the popular orators, and, in reply to an address which they presented to Mr. Grattan, as "ingenuous young men;" their eulogists sympathized in their native, unadulterated impressions, and accepted their address as the offerings of the young year: it was a better garland than the artificial honours of a court; the work of disinterested hands, and the present of uncontaminated hearts*.

On the meeting of Parliament, after some desultory, and far from conciliatory, conversation, Lord Cole moved an address, expressing the congratulation of the House of Commons, and its hope that his Excellency's measures would be uniformly directed to promote the interests of the country. This act of civility, which could not decently have been withheld, was voted without a division, but not without the dissent of Mr. Grattan, who would not enter into the merits of Lord Camden's appointment in the absence of the gentleman in whom he reposed confidence, but would content himself with giving a single negative to the motion, not from any disinclination toward his Excellency's person, having rather a respect for him, in consequence of the exalted character of his father, but because he felt himself much more strongly inclined to condole with the country on the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, than to congratulate on the appointment of Lord Camden.

Before the motion for the second reading of Mr. Grattan's bill for the general emancipation of the

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1795.
Proceedings
of the Roman
Catholics.
April 9.

Of the Univer-
sity students.

Mr. Grattan's
answer to their
address.

13th.
Address to
Lord Camden.

29th.
A college for
Catholics
established.

* An authentic statement of the proceedings of the Roman Catholics on the 9th of April was published in a pamphlet. A specimen of addresses to Mr. Grattan, and his answers, will be found in the Miscellaneous Works of Henry Grattan, p. 293 to 304.

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Roman Catholics came on, another measure was introduced for the better education of that class of people, by the establishment of a college. Against two of its provisions Mr. Grattan presented a petition: the first was that by which seven of the trustees were enabled to appoint a president, master, fellows, professors, and scholars, who they prayed might be elected, after public examination and under oath, in the manner practised in Trinity College, Dublin: the other was that by which no Protestant, or child of a Protestant father, should be permitted to receive education in the college. This exclusion the petitioners considered as tending to prevent that harmony, union, and friendly intercourse through life, which might be thus early cemented between the youth of different religious persuasions; the happy effects of which had been felt by the permission granted of having the Catholic youths educated in the University of Dublin. The petition was referred to a committee; but the bill passed without alteration*.

May 4.
Catholic relief
bill rejected.

On the motion for a second reading of the Catholic bill, the Solicitor General moved its rejection. Great talent was displayed on both sides: the chief opponents, beside the Solicitor General, were Mr. Pelham, Sir Edward Newenham, Mr. R. Johnson, and Dr. Dui-genan. Its principal supporters were the Honourable Dennis Browne, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Sir Lawrence Parsons, Mr. William Smith, the Honourable George Knox, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Curran, and Mr. Arthur O'Connor.

It is impossible, by any abstract, to convey a notion of the arguments used in the debate. History, law, religion, and policy, were all appealed to by both sides. Several of the speeches were published in a separate form; and the debate, in the volume of Irish Parliamentary History, occupies upward of one hundred and fifty closely printed octavo pages. In vain was an adjournment moved by Mr. Curran at one o'clock in the morning; the division did not take

* Plowden, vol. ii. p. 519.

place until half-past ten, when the Solicitor General's motion was carried*.

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1796.
Earl Fitzwilliam's publication.

April 21.
Motion by
Mr. Grattan.

Beside the observations frequently made in the course of discussion on other subjects, the recall of the late Viceroy occasioned debates and motions in the Parliaments both of Ireland and Great Britain: topics had been furnished by the publication of two pamphlets, under the title of Letters from him to the Earl of Carlisle. Mr. Grattan, after an ample review of the conduct which had been observed toward Lord Fitzwilliam, the complaints and grievances of Ireland, the measures which had been adopted for her relief, and those which his lordship had intended to effect, moved for a committee on the state of the nation. In the course of the debate, it was maintained, according to the noble Earl's own statement, that he, with the Duke of Portland and that portion of the opposition party, had been invited to a coalition, upon a declaration of the inability of the minister to manage the affairs of Ireland without their aid, and upon a promise that the government should be conducted under the direction and upon the system pursued by the Duke, while Lord Lieutenant; that the removal of certain great officers, which occasioned the Earl's recall, had been matter of stipulation on one side, and engagement on the other; while the agitation of the Catholic question had been foreseen and known. It was answered, that for Mr. Pitt to have coalesced with the Duke of Portland and his friends, was one of the brightest traits in his character; but that he should go on his knees, begging to the Duke of Portland, or any other man, and tell him, "we have carried on such a system of falsehood, corruption, and tyranny, in Ireland, that, unless you will coalesce, and take the management of that country, we are ruined," was improbable; and were it otherwise, the Duke of Port-

* 155 to 84. Among the names above mentioned, the reader may be struck with that of Arthur O'Connor. His speech, Mr. Plowden observes, vol. ii. p. 521, first raised him into note. He was brought into Parliament by his uncle, Lord Longueville, who was a supporter of administration. He was so offended with the speech of his nephew, that the next morning he sent for him, and desired him to resign his seat which accordingly he did.

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land ought not to have joined with such a minister. That, on Lord Fitzwilliam's recall, neither the Duke of Portland, Lord Spencer, Mr. Windham, his dearest friends, nor any other member of the coalition, had resented it, or abandoned their connexion with Mr. Pitt. The motion was rejected*. Sir Lawrence Parsons moved a severe censure on the Earl of Westmoreland, for having violated the compact entered into with the Crown, and dispensing with the law, by authorising too great a number of troops to be sent out of the country. The obvious intention of this motion, as well as of one by Mr. Curran for a remonstrance to the King, was to enhance the value of Lord Fitzwilliam's administration, by censuring that of his predecessor. Both were negatived without a division, on motions for adjournment.

Proceedings
in the British
Parliament.
March 24.

Mr. Fox.

In the British Parliament, the transaction was arraigned with unmeasured severity. On the very day that Earl Fitzwilliam departed from Dublin, Mr. Fox, in his motion for a committee on the state of the nation, descanted forcibly on the state of Ireland, ascribing the existing irritation to the treatment and removal of their popular governor: but to this portion of his argument little answer was given.

May 8.
Motion by the
Duke of Nor-
folk.

The Earl of
Westmore-
land.

When disclosures, complaints, and public discussion†, had excited considerable expectation, the Duke of Norfolk moved for the correspondence between ministers and Earl Fitzwilliam, relating to the motives and grounds of his recall at the particular time it took place. His grace's speech produced explanations from the two late Lieutenants. The Earl of Westmoreland explicitly denied the truth of many of the positions in Earl Fitzwilliam's letters, adverting especially to the general assertions that the government of Ireland was one of corruption and oppression, while they were not supported by any specific act or instance; the allegations concerning Mr. Beresford, who had been dismissed from his office on the third day after Earl Fitz-

* 158 to 48.

† More than twelve pamphlets issued from the press, beside paragraphs, letters in newspapers, and essays in periodical works.

william's arrival, without inculpation, or opportunity of explanation or defence; and against Lord Fitzgibbon, which were refuted by all the acts of that nobleman's political life. If, as the Duke of Norfolk intimated, the consequence and dignity of the English government had been lost, how happened it that he obtained such universal support? How happened it that he had found a strong and leagued opposition on his arrival, which he turned over to the noble Earl so weakened, that it could throw no serious obstacles in the way of government? On the subject of the Roman Catholics, he expressed freely his opinions against the propriety of granting all their demands; and his Majesty's ministers concurred with him, that such a conciliation would be fatal to the honour of the King, and perhaps tend to produce a separation of the countries.

Earl Fitzwilliam rather renewed his former complaints, than answered these observations. He was now convinced of the truth of his expressed opinion, that the Catholic question was not the genuine cause of his recall. Lord Westmoreland, according to his own account, had returned from Ireland only with the intention to govern it more securely. He himself had not been there two days before he discovered what the noble Earl now avowed—his intention to embarrass the government; and that a perfect system for that end had been formed with the ministers at home. He should not follow the example that had been set him; he should not intrigue, either publicly or privately; he should only support the character of those honourable men with whom he had been most immediately connected. He pronounced a vehement eulogy on the talents and principles of Mr. Grattan, spoke of the weight and influence of Mr. Ponsonby, and vindicated the removals from office which had been so much censured, in the propriety of which, even his friend the Earl of Carlisle did not agree; and his conduct with respect to the Roman Catholics, which he maintained to be strictly accordant to the system on which he had received the government, and perfectly under-

Earl Fitzwilliam.

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stood by the Duke of Portland. The motion was rejected*; but probably all that was expected from it was gained, by the opportunity it afforded of entering on the Journals a long protest in fifteen articles, signed by Lord Ponsonby and Earl Fitzwilliam, and an additional article by the latter nobleman alone.

19th.
Motion by Mr.
Jekyll.

Mr. Jekyll repeated the motion of the Duke of Norfolk in the House of Commons; and both he and Mr. Fox supported it with long speeches; but little novelty occurred: they relied much on Earl Fitzwilliam's published letters. Mr. Pitt denied that government resisted this inquiry through fear of its results, but on account of its extreme impropriety, and moved the order of the day, which was carried†.

Observations.

By all these efforts, the friends of Earl Fitzwilliam rendered him no real service. His character, as a man of honour and of proper public feeling, stood too high to require the aid of testimonials, or to be elucidated by declamations or arguments; but the infallibility of his judgment, or the superior correctness of his understanding to that of all his colleagues, in a question of political arrangement, was not so easily to be conceded. The propositions they had to maintain, deduced from his own letters and speeches, were—first, that when he and his friends accepted office, and formed what was called the coalition with Mr. Pitt, the Duke of Portland received full assurances that his plan of government in Ireland should be accomplished; and with that view the appointment of lord lieutenant was made‡: second, that the removal of individuals, and not the measure in favour of the Roman Catholics, produced his recall: and third, that the whole proceeding was a scheme to vilify and disgrace the Whig party.

On the first of these subjects, the field of assertion must be left uncontested in the possession of the Earl, subject only to observations on the score of probability. It was not to be expected that the confidential ser-

* 100 to 25

† 180 to 43.

‡ On this subject, see a Letter from Dr. Laurence to the Duke of Portland, dated the 20th Oct. 1794 Epistolary Correspondence of Mr. Burke and Dr. Laurence, p. 269.

vants of the Crown would, in contempt of their duty, enter into a contest of assertions, exposing their sentiments, principles, and conduct, to general animadversion, aware that all allegations in their own favour would be treated as of no importance, while every admission would be magnified, and every casual expression tortured, to their disadvantage. But, waiving all personal consideration of the minister and his colleagues, it does not appear probable that the persons alluded to, after they had declared their adherence to the measures of government, and, distinguishing themselves from their old party friends, had proclaimed their detestation of the principles and practices of the French, and supported the war against them, would have been allured into a closer alliance by the donation of office, without any sincerity or cordiality on the other part. The second assertion also is deficient in weight. It does not appear to be correct in all its structure; although in some parts it is not without foundation. It probably is true that government saw with alarm the projected removal, without a complaint alleged, or a reason assigned, of all those tried and faithful servants who for so many years had supported the cause and interests of this country, and the substitution of those who had omitted no opportunity, nor avoided any extreme, in opposing them. His lordship complained that the family of Beresfords, who, in the Duke of Portland's days, were clerks, were, in his, become ministers*. If that were true in his day, future possessors of the same offices, aided by the influence and acclamation of a large body of the people, would have become truly formidable or irresistibly superior to any government. Thus it was that the measure relating to the Roman Catholics, combined with his own precipitancy, occasioned the event under discussion.

On the last point, no words but those of the noble complainant himself can be properly employed. "Cruelly," he says, "as the Duke of Portland has treated me, I feel no difficulty to say that his judgment was

* First Letter, p. 5.

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“deceived before he abandoned me. On whatever grounds he has suffered himself to be induced to change his former opinions respecting the politics of this country, and the characters and views of its principal personages, he did change those opinions; and, in consequence of that change alone, he has been driven to consent to the measure of my instant recall.”

*** “When the Duke of Portland and his friends were to be enticed into a coalition with Mr. Pitt’s administration, it was necessary to hold out such lures as would make the coalition palatable, or even possible for them to accede to. If the general management and superintendence of Ireland had not been offered to his Grace, that coalition could never have taken place. The sentiments that he had entertained, and the language he had held so publicly for many years back, on the subject, rendered it a point that could not be dispensed with; accordingly it was offered from the beginning of the negotiation; as was also the home department of secretary of state.* * * But the instant we had proclaimed our acceptance, the scene began to open: then it was first discovered that the object of all this mighty work was, not to strengthen administration by an accession of character, but to debase, degrade, and disgrace that character. When the junction was irrevocably avowed and declared, then the pretensions of Mr. Dundas to the continued management of the war were immediately brought forward; and a new office was to be cabbaged out of the Duke of Portland’s, and an obvious diminution of his credit and authority was proclaimed. No sooner had I declared my acceptance of the Lieutenancy of Ireland, than delay interposed, and soon doubts and difficulties arose. It is a matter of public notoriety in this country, that Mr. Pitt assured Lord Westmoreland, as early as August, that he should not be removed: and I know that I could bring evidence to prove, that, in the course of the autumn, he pointed out my actual successor as the person to succeed my predecessor. No; Mr. Pitt did not wish for our assistance; but, knowing the importance we gave to the system then

“pursuing relative to France, he snatched at the opportunity, and made that the means of disgracing our characters, and rendering us fit for no other service, but to be his tools and instruments. He thought that object perfected and complete; then he cared not how soon he turned us adrift, to all the disgrace and contempt it was his expectation and wish should attach upon our characters*.”

From such statements, it was to be inferred that the Duke of Portland, Earl Spencer, and Mr. Windham, men of great understanding and experience, could not only be duped, and, although not driven to seek office from indigence or the want of any thing that wealth could supply, would retain the situations so disgracefully conferred, and treat an old friend, justly termed “a venerated nobleman,” with cruelty, after the fraud by which they had been deceived was clearly exposed, and the plan for their own vilification fully demonstrated. If Lord Fitzwilliam himself could, in any respect, be said to have been duped, it was by falling into a trap, baited with popularity, and laid for him by the demagogues of Dublin. Under their auspices, from the time when his probable appointment was announced, and the hopes to be entertained from it were ardently cherished, public opinion appeared to take a different turn. The war, which had been unfavourably, or at best but languidly, regarded, became extensively popular; the naval and military services were copiously recruited; the House of Commons passed votes of thanks to Lord Howe, Lord Hood, and Admiral Jervis; and a supply, to the unprecedented amount of £1,700,000, was granted.

That these appearances of quiet should be disturbed, was matter of serious regret; but they were, in fact, neither the indications, nor the fruits of real amity and good-will. In all their proceedings hitherto, the friends of the Roman Catholics had shewn themselves not solicitous for a favour, but clamorous for a right; every concession was received with verbal acknowledgments of gratitude, but retained only as

* Letter from a Venerated Nobleman to the Earl of Carlisle, pp. 17, 27, 29.

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advanced ground by which more should be acquired. To what extent these increasing demands would be carried, it was impossible to foresee: had they been for the present, the reverse of what they were, in perfect accord in all their opinions, no individual or body among them could have made a compact which should bind those by whom they would be succeeded. Exaggerating perhaps in some degree, they boasted that they formed three-fourths of the population; but it was quite notorious that nineteen-twentieths of the property were in the hands of Protestants. The Catholics, beside their demand of seats in the legislature, had already declared their aim to be universal suffrage among the electors. Could these points have been attained, political ascendancy and ecclesiastical establishment must have vanished from the Protestants, and property secured by possession of ages have been rendered insecure. The crisis was difficult, and the alternative between self-destructive concession and meditated rebellion required care, prudence, and mature consideration, instead of precipitation and the rash adoption of any system, however forcibly urged or speciously recommended.

Suggestion of
an intended
Union.

It has been said, that the appointment of Earl Fitzwilliam was perhaps the most deep and treacherous design ever contemplated by a minister. Mr. Pitt decided on forcing a premature insurrection for a particular object; but did not calculate on the torrent of blood that would be shed, and the inveterate hatred that might be perpetuated against the British government. He wanted only a high-minded victim as an instrument to agitate the Irish. He raised the Catholics to the height of expectation, and by suddenly deceiving them, and recalling the viceroy, inflamed them to the degree of generating the commotions he meditated, and which would throw the Protestants into the arms of England for protection, whilst the horrors would be aggravated by the conflicts between royalists and republicans*. It is not necessary to observe upon the equal want of temper and of veracity

* Historic Memoirs of Ireland, by Sir Jonah Barrington, vol. ii. p. 241.

displayed by this writer ; he was no more able, by the strength of his judgment or understanding, to unravel the mind or the motives of Mr. Pitt, than he was, from confidential disclosures, to relate them. The passage is only referred to for the purpose of observing, that the ultimate measure supposed to prevail in the mind of the minister, the accomplishment of which he would seek by means so perfidious and cruel, was the union of Great Britain and Ireland. It would be too much to say that such a scheme had never entered the imagination of the British government ; that it was believed to have done so, was obvious from the course of the debate at the Catholic meeting in Francis Street, where several of the speakers treated on it, and one of their resolutions was, " That they were sincerely and unalterably attached to the rights, liberties, and independence of their native country ; and pledged themselves, collectively and individually, to resist even their own emancipation, if proposed to be conceded upon the ignominious terms of acquiescence in the fatal measure of an union of the kingdoms*."

April 9.

Such was the state in which Ireland was placed after the departure of Earl Fitzwilliam : to describe the ensuing events will form a necessary, but most unsatisfactory labour†.

* Seward's *Collectanea politica*, vol. iii p. 135.

† In relating the events comprised in this chapter, I have generally followed Mr. Plowden, who, if he has shewn some particular feelings in relating and reasoning on facts, has not been guilty of falsifying or concealing them. I have sometimes referred to passages in his volumes for the sake of marking a particular course of reasoning or mode of expression. I have also, as will be seen by the references, not omitted to consult other authorities.

CHAPTER THE NINETY-THIRD.

1794—1795.

Effects of the fall of Robespierre.—Conflict of parties.—Publications.—Jeunesse de Fréron.—Exertions in the Convention.—Tumults in the provinces.—Rage of the Jacobins. Expelled from their club-room.—The Girondists reinstated. Moderate decrees.—Prosecution of men of blood.—Insurrections of the Jacobins.—State of the Convention.—A new constitution projected.—Hopes of the Royalists.—Miserable death of Louis the Seventeenth.—Insurrection in La Vendée.—Application to England.—Expedition fitted out.—Hoche commands the French troops.—Treachery among the emigrants.—English fleet employed.—Capture of French ships.—Landing at Quiberon.—Discord among the emigrants.—Defeat of the Royalists.—Attack on Fort Penthièvre.—Total defeat of the Royalists.—Fatal end of the expedition.—Conduct of the Count de Sombreuil.—Capture of l'Isle Dieu.—Unjust reflections on the British Government.—Liberation of the daughter of Louis the Sixteenth.—State of the Orléans family.—New constitution.—Obnoxious decrees.—Resistance to them.—Napoléon Bonaparte employed.—He suppresses the insurrection.—End and character of the Convention.—The executive Directory.—Conduct of the new government.—Depreciation of assignats.—Mandats.

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1794.
Effects of
the fall of
Robespierre.

FROM the fall of Robespierre may be dated the destruction of the democratic republic of France, and the rise of a system more congenial to the forms of government in other civilized countries. Far from

desiring or even anticipating any precise consequences from the measure they promoted, the destroyers of Robespierre, had they been interrogated, could only have given a view of their further expectations in vague and general terms, such as the restoration of independence, or a return to justice; but if they went so far as to indicate a mitigation of the system of terror, they had neither the principle nor the courage to suggest its abolition: as a proof, while the mortal contest was raging between the two factions, sixty victims of the revolutionary tribunal passed through the streets to the place of execution, and no voice of a public functionary, a national guard, or a private individual, was raised to implore or command delay. The public feeling of a respite from danger was indicated by addresses which flowed in from all parts of the country, repeating the phrase, "Catiline is no more! the Republic is saved!" The party who had overthrown the tyrant took on themselves the name of Thermidorians; their opponents, nothing discouraged, assumed that of Summit of the Mountain. They still composed the popular committees formed for the trial of the persons imprisoned; the revolutionary tribunal and the office of Fouquier Tainville were still in existence, ready, on a breath of encouragement, to resume their terrible activity, and the Jacobin Club was re-established by Collot D'Herbois, Billaud de Varennes, and Legendre; but the threatened evil was discovered and averted. A decree, obtained the day after the execution of Robespierre, for purifying the committees and suspending the operations of the revolutionary tribunal, diffused joy and hope among the prisoners: they were now enabled to see their friends and to receive the necessaries and comforts of life; their relatives could now shew themselves in public meetings, which had so long been entirely filled by ruffians hired at twenty-pence a-day: the Convention received their petitions: Legendre, Merlin, and several other deputies, visited the houses of detention; and, from an indefatigable examination of the warrants, found that the prisoners were not charged with any offence pointed out by the

July 29.

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XCIII.

1794.

law, nor was any specific cause or complaint alleged against them; their liberation, like their arrest, was sudden and general. The Committees of Public and of General Safety had their numbers filled up, by substituting others for those who had been artfully sent on missions, or suffered under the axe of popular vengeance; the law of the Vingt-deux Prairial*, that formidable engine of Robespierre's tyranny, was repealed; and intimations were heard of the propriety of bringing to justice the oppressors of the people, who had disgraced the republic†.

Conflict of
parties.

These measures, with their probable consequences, were viewed with alarm by those who apprehended the punishment of their misconduct; and by some who still considered terror as the only system by which the vigour of the republican government could be maintained. A deadly conflict between the two parties was foreseen: the public wish was in favour of the Thermidorians; but a sudden victory was not to be obtained; and Lecointre injured rather than advanced the interests of his friends by a premature denunciation of Billaud de Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Barrère, Vadier, Amar, Voulland, and David, members of the two committees; his motion was voted calumnious, and his effort attributed to occasional insanity. About the same period, great consternation was created by the explosion of the gunpowder manufactory at Grenelle, near Paris, which shook the whole city. It was produced by mere accident, but the public attributed it to design; and, according to prejudices or political views, federalists, royalists, and terrorists were alternately accused. The press, no longer restrained, daily and vigorously exposed the crimes of the committees and their commissioners, the savage cruelties exercised on prisoners, the iniquities of the revolutionary tribunal, and of the military executions in the departments; the sufferings, the tragical deaths, and the almost miraculous escapes of some of the proscribed deputies.

August 31.

September 2.

Publications.

* See vol. v. p. 660.

† Among the persons liberated, were two who materially influenced the fate of France in war and in politics, General Hoche and Madame Fontenay, afterward married to Tallien.

Fashion, all powerful in France, lent her aid to the cause of the Thermidorians : decency of manners, family hospitality, and clean linen being no longer deemed proofs of aristocracy, conspiracy, or royalism, social intercourse and festive gaieties were resumed ; but, in commemoration of their escape from the abhorred system, the dress of gentlemen was so contrived, that the cropped hair and the shape of the coat collar represented a preparation for the guillotine ; and an assembly for dancing was established, admission to which could only be obtained by having had a near relative executed during the reign of terror.

Under the benevolent influence of the lady whose life he had saved and afterward had married, Tallien appeared to have changed his character. He who had been the apologist, if not a perpetrator, of the massacres in September 1792, who had been among the fiercest of the Jacobins, the persecutor and destroyer of several of the Girondists, now appeared as the leader of the Thermidorians ; and his aim was not frustrated by the failure of a clumsy contrivance by which he attempted to make it appear that the terrorists had attempted to assassinate him. He was strenuously aided by Fréron, son of the journalist, whom Voltaire has condemned to an ignominious immortality. This man, the adherent and personal friend of Robespierre and Marat, had displayed, in Toulon and Marseilles, a cruelty and ferocity perfectly according with the spirit of those with whom he acted ; but, having become suspected by Robespierre, had exerted himself in destroying him, and now assumed to be the persecutor of the terrorists. Having animated the popular fury in a public journal, which he called *l'Orateur du Peuple*, he assembled a body of young men who were called sometimes *la Jeunesse de Fréron*, and afterward, from some affectation of splendour in their attire, *la Jeunesse dorée*. With the ardour appropriate to their age, they engaged in defending the less furious portion of the legislature, and in displaying hatred and contempt of the bloody tyrants, struggling to resume their lost ascendancy. Although unarmed and acting under

*Jeunesse de
Fréron.*

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no acknowledged or visible commander, they made themselves formidable throughout Paris; they domineered in the theatres and public places, compelling the actors to dwell upon, and the audience to applaud, the passages or pieces they were pleased to patronize; they hunted the known men of blood through the streets, into places of retreat or concealment; and substituted, for the beautiful music and energetic versification of the Marseillois Hymn, a composition equally tame and spiritless in both particulars, although equally sanguinary, which they called *Le Reveil du Peuple**. One of their memorable exploits was the removing of the busts of Marat from the theatres and public places, and next his remains from the Pantheon, where they had been placed with a profane and absurd mockery of all religion, dragging them through the kennels of Paris, and leaving them at last in their more appropriate repository, a common sewer.

Exertions in
the Conven-
tion.

In the Convention, their patron, Fréron, made great exertions in favour of the liberty of the press: the legislature regulated and diminished the powers and offices of government, by decrees, which, if they precluded the probability of tyranny, portended certain inefficiency and anarchy. The revolutionary committees, established in every little town and village, were reduced in number and circumscribed in authority, and the prisons were cleared of the numerous body called suspected.

Tumults in the
provinces.

While these transactions occupied the capital, the provinces experienced the effects of vengeful re-action. At Marseilles, at Lyons, and other places in the south, the friends and relatives of those who had been sacrificed, calling themselves "Companies of the Sun" and "Companies of Jesus," rose and retaliated on their oppressors by acts of savage ferocity, rivalling those by which they had been provoked. These proceedings excited rage and fear in the Jacobins; their club resounded with the fervid denunciations and threats

Rage of the
Jacobins.

* This song, common enough in its day, is now rarely met with. It may be found in *Paris pendant l'Année 1795*, par M. Peltier, tom. i. p. 43.

of fatal consequences when the sleeping lion should arouse. In the Convention, Tallien exposed to just abhorrence a system, the supporters of which could not believe in the safety of the republic, unless a thousand Frenchmen and nearly as many Frenchwomen were offered up as a daily sacrifice. The rejected accusation against Billaud and his associates was renewed, and referred to a committee; and, finally, Legendre, leading a body of the Jeunesse dorée, proceeded to the hall of the society; and, after a contest, in which characteristic cruelty and indecency were displayed, expelled the members, closed the doors, and, depositing the keys on the table of the Convention, abolished that centre of crime and infamy which had so long disgraced the country. Finally, the seventy-three Girondist members, who had been expelled or imprisoned since the overthrow of their party, were liberated and restored to their seats.

Thus reinforced, the Thermidorians were enabled to decree the freedom of religious worship, although they disclaimed any thing like an establishment, and to restore a portion of the sequestered property of persons suspected. Carrier, Le Bon, and some others, were tried before the revolutionary tribunal for crimes committed while on mission in the departments; crimes which, for their number and enormity, could not be paralleled by the historian, and transcended even the inventions of the poet. In his defence, Carrier alleged that he had always acted on the orders of the committee, which he was obliged to obey, and that the legislature itself had approved his acts, and applauded the terms in which he announced them: the defence, however just, was unavailing; he was executed with the rest, and the like fate awaited Fouquier Tainville and some other members of the old Revolutionary Tribunal. The committee of twenty-one doomed Billaud, Collot d'Herbois, Barrère, and Vadier, to transportation; but acquitted Voulard, Amar, and David: this distinction was attributed to the manly resolution of Carnot, who declared that, as he had never separated himself from the acts, he would abide the fate of his

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October 18.
Expelled from
their club-
room.

The Girondists
reinstated.

Moderate
decrees.

Prosecution of
men of blood.

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Insurrections
of the
Jacobins.

colleagues: his services could not be dispensed with, and his usefulness procured their safety.

Defeated and disgraced as they were, the terrorists did not suffer these humiliating events to take place without a shew of resistance. Their power of inflaming the populace was augmented by the pressure of scarcity; an uncommonly severe season having brought indescribable misery and distress into the dwellings of the industrious and the poor, the Jacobins raised the ever-ready multitude of the faubourgs, and beset the hall of the Convention, screaming for bread, the constitution of 1793, and the deliverance of the patriots, whose case had not yet been investigated. In their accustomed manner, they assumed seats on the benches, made seditious speeches; but, at the sound of the tocsin, the Troupe dorée assembled; led by Pichegru, they entered the hall, vociferating, "le reveil du "people:" the mob fled, and tranquillity was restored. In the close of the investigation, the committee of twenty-one sentenced seventeen members of the Mountain to imprisonment in the Castle of Ham, and the sentence was executed, notwithstanding an attempted rescue.

1796.
April 1.

May 20.

Perfect quiet was not yet restored; deprived of their leaders, excluded from all influence in the commune, and having no longer a central place of meeting, the Jacobins still prepared a new and desperate enterprise. Prepared with the form of a petition, but supported, as they hoped, with a force to command, a mob of thirty thousand squalid ruffians rushed from the faubourgs, surrounded the hall of the Convention, and, clamouring for bread and the constitution of 1793, or death, forced the doors, put to flight the obnoxious members, and drove from the chair the President Vernier; Boissy d'Anglas, with heroic presence of mind, supplied his place; nor did he retire from it, even when the head of Ferrand*, one of his colleagues who had been murdered by these wretches, was put upon a pike and brandished in his face. From nine

* It is suggested as probable that the insurgents mistook his name for that of Fréron.

o'clock till eleven at night, the insurgents retained possession of the hall, the members of the Mountain party, their instigators and fellow-labourers, passing whatever decrees they came prepared to suggest, when Legendre, supported by a band of young men, armed with pistols and sabres, appeared; those who so lately assumed the character of arrogant despots, became suppliants for mercy or fugitives for safety; the decrees surreptitiously obtained, were as suddenly repealed, and peace appeared to be restored. On the following days, the tumult was renewed; the Convention decreed that the faubourg should be disarmed; some of the young men, urged by a too impetuous zeal, penetrated into the precincts with so little discretion, that they were surrounded and their retreat cut off; fortunately their lives were not sacrificed; and a force of thirty thousand men, armed in defence of the legislature, threatening general destruction by a cannonade and bombardment, the insurgents submitted, and this formidable centre of sedition and every species of violence was totally disarmed. In conclusion, twenty-five members of the Convention were arrested, and might with propriety have been sent to the scaffold, but only six were selected; of them, three eluded their fate by stabbing themselves in the presence of their judges; the other three made a similar attempt, but, not entirely accomplishing their purpose, were placed under the axe of the guillotine. The ascendancy of the Girondists was now complete; on the motion of Louvet, on the thirty-first of May, an expiatory festival was celebrated, in honour of the victims of that day, hitherto considered as one of the most glorious of the Revolution.

Thus degraded, even in their own eyes, hated by many, and despised by all; administrators of a system which could in no proper sense be denominated a government, the Convention perceived the necessity of changing the form and manner of social arrangement. The failure of previous attempts had imparted some of the benefits of experience. The wisdom and disinterestedness so vaunted in those who framed the code

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21st, 22nd.

State of the
Convention.

A new
Constitution
projected.

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of 1791, had produced worse effects than ordinary displays of folly and selfishness; the wild democratic absurdity called the constitution of 1793, had been made only to be suspended, and none but the most mischievous of political fanatics regretted its final abandonment. The want of an executive head, independent of the legislative body, was generally recognized; and the folly achieved by the constituent assembly of giving all the powers of making laws to one house, without the assent, restraint, or control of another assembly, had been dreadfully demonstrated. Still there was a remnant, unawed by events, untaught by failures, sufficiently sanguine to expect benefit from the permanence of the democratic system; and, as this party, by activity and obstinacy, compensated for the deficiency in number and credit, there was still reason to apprehend that the rank weed of jacobinism might again flourish and over-run the country.

Hopes of the
Royalists.

Miserable
death of
Louis the
Seventeenth.

Emigrants and priests, who had of late been permitted to return, maintained in all their extent the ancient principles, and were disposed to claim their abolished rights and privileges; but, at all events, they looked to the restoration of royalty, in the person of their undoubtedly lawful sovereign, Louis the Seventeenth. Of the personal beauty and mental promise of this young prince, when only in his eighth year, we are informed by several near observers*; how they were blasted, forms a disgraceful record of inhumanity and persevering malignity. His sufferings cannot be palliated as the unauthorized acts of overweening ruffians, who misunderstood their instructions or exceeded their authority; their daily proceedings, displayed before the Convention and the commune, were not only approved, but loudly applauded. The details, given with great force by many writers†, form a disgusting and appalling display of the miseries which a relentless

* Bertrand's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 40; Peltier's late *Picture of Paris*, vol. i. p. 201.

† See the *Histories*, and *Debates in general*; *Biographical Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 158; *Lacréelle*, tom. xii. p. 367; and the *Private Memoirs of the Duchesse d'Angoulême*, *passim*.

nation could inflict on a child, too young to have offended, and against whom nothing could be advanced but that he was the son of his parents. Four months after the fall of Robespierre, the Committee of Public Safety denied any intention to mitigate the sufferings or improve the condition of the persecuted victim: the Committees and the Convention, they said, knew how to strike off the heads of kings, but not how to educate their offspring. The brutal treatment he received, the privation of every comfort and of most necessities, impaired his faculties and undermined his health. Death, at length, relieved him from further torments, at the age of ten years and two months, two years and ten months of which he had passed in rigid confinement, and under the lash of daily cruelty*.

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June 9th.

Urged by repeated infractions of the treaty under which they had consented to a peace, and animated by the increasing spirit of royalism in France, the people of Brittany, Poitou, Maine, Anjou, and Normandy, had again taken up arms, and made some successful, though partial, attacks on the republicans. Charette commanded the Vendéans; the Chouans and other royalists were led by Count Joseph de Puisaye, Stofflet, and many other chiefs; but their concert was imperfect, their views discordant, and rivalry and even animosity prevailed amongst them. Against these insurgents, the republican government applied all their means of force and intrigue; and they succeeded in effecting a transient and treacherous pacification with Charette. The Convention deputed three representatives to the armies of the coast, of Brest and Cherbourg; assemblies of the people without requisition were declared unlawful, the white cockade a counter-

June 16.

* At the period of the prince's death, many were of opinion, and supported it by plausible reasons, that it was accelerated by poison; some thought that he had escaped from captivity, and that the corpse, upon which a very doubtful and unsatisfactory report of surgeons was made, was that of a substituted child. If any lover of historic doubts, after the lapse of two or three centuries, should think proper to deny the death of Louis the Seventeenth, he may find support for his arguments, and suggestions to guide his further researches, in a work entitled *Abbrégé de l'Histoire des infortunes du Dauphin*. The author, who claims to be the son of Louis the Sixteenth, is still alive; but, less fortunate than Perkin Warbeck, he finds no Duchess of Burgundy to countenance his claims; no King of Scotland to make war, no rebels to rise in arms in support of them.

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1795.

26th.

Application to
England.

revolutionary badge ; and prosecution and punishment were denounced against the leaders of the Chouans. The royalist chiefs, in counter-declarations, unfolded the treachery by which the late treaty had been obtained. Charette affirmed that the representatives had obtained his acquiescence by positive assurances that the royal family should be restored ; and, in confirmation of their sincerity, had left the insurgents in possession of their arms. In violation of these engagements, their chief had been surrendered to sanguinary tribunals, their infantry and cavalry disarmed, the atrocities and horrors of civil war renewed, and, lastly, the ill-fated son of their unfortunate King had, in a cowardly manner, been poisoned.

In the mean time, the Count de Puisaye, coming to London to solicit assistance, had been favourably received by Mr. Pitt, by whose direction he prepared a memorial, fully detailing the hopes, the situation, and the resources of the royalists, and the reasons for believing that a small body of British troops, aided by the corps of emigrants and the loyal inhabitants of France, would be able to effect all that could be desired. Arrangements were made, with the approbation of Lord Grenville and Mr. Dundas, for embodying and placing the friends of the cause in France ; and it was agreed that all places should be taken possession of in the name of the French sovereign. With the concurrence of Earl Cornwallis, it was also determined that the command of the enterprize should be confided to Lord Moira. Assignats, distinguished by a private mark, were fabricated in England, largely circulated in France, and received, even by the Jacobins, as presenting a better probability of ultimate payment than those issued by the Convention.

Expedition
fitted out.

It was soon found that the secrecy, so essential to the success of M. de Puisaye's attempt, could not be preserved. Emigrants in London, jealous of his apparently confidential intercourse with ministers, spread over slight facts which they knew, a great mass of speculation and conjecture ; the French government became alarmed, and, rightly divining the point where

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Hoche commands the French troops.

an attack was meditated, employed all means of seduction to occasion treachery, and all the arts of false intelligence to cause inaction in the royalists. The protection of the provinces was assigned to the brave, active, and uncompromising General Hoche, who had the mortification to see the spirit of disaffection, especially after the death of the young King, daily and widely extending, producing the frequent desertion of whole masses of his troops, who then became the most rancorous enemies of their former comrades.

Treachery among the emigrants.

Amid numerous difficulties and embarrassments, M. de Puisaye made every effort to create an effective army: he gained the assistance of several emigrant officers; but the term emigrant included so many descriptions of persons, that no uniformity of principle, conduct, or views, could be depended on. All agreed in desiring the overthrow of the existing system and the re-establishment of the throne; but the first class of emigrants expected that every thing in France should be placed on its ancient footing; rank, privileges, property both ecclesiastical and civil, restored to the position which they occupied before the outbreak of any revolution. Some were adverse to privileges, some to the clergy at least, if not to Christianity altogether. On the restoration of estates, conflicting opinions were maintained; while, on the subject of succession, a residue of the Orléans party would not consent to exclude that house from all hope; and others would have seen with regret the surrender of conquest and influence which must have taken place had a counter-revolution been effected by the aid of the allied powers. The regiments of emigrants already formed in England were anxious to signalize themselves on their native soil; and many prisoners of war, both military and naval, obtained permission to arm in a cause to which they professed themselves truly attached. The confidence placed in these men was inconsiderate, and, in the event, proved most disastrous; but many emigrant officers of the navy accepted service in ranks far below those they had formerly occupied, and to which they still considered

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English fleet
employed.

themselves intitled. The Bishop of Dol, with a considerable number of clergy and gentlemen of good family, joined to give aid and effect to the enterprize.

After some discussion whether the intended aid should be first afforded to the Vendéans or to another body called Chouans*, the latter party was preferred; and a naval armament, under Sir John Borlase Warren, was prepared to convey the royalists and a small body of British troops, with which M. de Puisaye proposed to effect a landing and to maintain his ground until an auxiliary force of ten thousand men, under the Earl of Moira, should arrive. The royalists were not only well armed and equipped themselves, but, with a liberality bordering on profusion, clothes, arms, shoes, provisions, and comforts of every kind were provided for those who might join the royal army.

June 23.
Capture of
French ships.

Apprized of the intended expedition, the French sent to sea a fleet of sixteen sail of the line, with a proportionate number of frigates and smaller vessels, under Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, part of which cruised before Belleisle, the residue near Brest. The portion of Belleisle was descried by a squadron of about equal strength, commanded by Lord Bridport. The French Admiral avoided a general engagement; but, through the superior manœuvring of his opponent, le Formidable and le Tigre of eighty, and the Alexandre of seventy-four guns, were captured; with singular imprudence, the greater portion of the republican prisoners were permitted to enrol themselves as volunteers in the royalist army.

27th.
Landing at
Quiberon.
July 3rd.

The troops landed at Quiberon, and, amid the joyful acclamations of the whole people, made themselves masters of Fort Penhièvre, its principal defence, and, consequently, of the whole peninsula. Even at this early period of the enterprize, dangerous discords began to shew themselves. Count d'Hervilly, the

* The Chouans were the Royalists inhabiting the five departments of Brittany and some neighbouring districts. They were accustomed to contraband trade, brave, and expert in the use of fire-arms: their habit was to lurk in ambush and conquer by surprise, rather than offer themselves to regular military conflict; and their name, Chouan, corrupted from Chathuant, the Owl, was given to them from their general preference of nocturnal expeditions.—Lacretelle, vol. xii. p. 103.

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Discord
among the
emigrants.

Defeat of the
royalists.

July 16.

Attack of
Fort
Penthièvre.

commander-in-chief of the French troops, was a nobleman of high extraction, of indisputable bravery and loyalty, but positive, dilatory, tenacious, punctilious, and jealous of every one who could be supposed to rival his deeds or eclipse his fame. From the effect of this temper, the Comte de Sombreuil was not permitted to land and join in the first operations, and the loyal inhabitants were disconcerted at seeing the smallness of the force by which the royal standard was to be reared, and the republican government overthrown. Had d'Hervilly been more enterprising, a junction with the Vendéans might have been effected, and the whole province of Brittany acquired. Hoche, who was largely reinforced, concealed his strength, and the royalists soon experienced the superiority of his tactics, by a defeat which they sustained in an injudicious attack on the intrenched camp of Sainte Barbe, where, after an engagement conducted with great bravery, they were utterly routed, d'Hervilly and their principal leaders killed, and the retreat of the survivors was protected only by the fire of the British fleet. Other attempts of the royalists met with no better success; the zeal of the people was chilled by terror, and when, as a last resource, Count Sombreuil, on whom the command had devolved, landed with sixteen hundred men, he met but a cool and indifferent reception, very different from that which attended the first disembarkation.

Fort Penthièvre was now the only strong defence of the royalists; it was capable of a long, and probably successful, resistance to the opposed force; but treachery completed the ruin of the enterprize. The garrison, by a strange imprudence, was composed almost entirely of men who, by the simulation of altered sentiments, had been liberated from English prisons, and to those least to be trusted of the regiment of Hervilly. Thirty or forty of them, having first established a confraternity with the others of their description, deserted from the fort, and conveyed to the besiegers intelligence which enabled them to effect a surprise. A body of grenadiers, headed by General Menage, aided by columns under Hoche, Humbert,

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July 19-20.

and Valtaux, marched to the attack, at about eleven o'clock. The night was not merely one of storm, but a furious hurricane. Peals of thunder, torrents of rain, and the roaring of the sea, prevented the garrison from hearing the approach of the enemy, while a tempest of wind, such as rarely occurs in these climates, rendered it impossible for the navy to approach the shore, even if they had been apprized of the existing danger. The republicans themselves, confounded with the density of the darkness, the frequency of the lightning, and the impetuosity of the wind, which, rendering their footing over a stony and irregular beach insecure, frequently overthrew them in heaps, were disposed to refuse perseverance. Encouraged at last by the treacherous deserters, and animated by the remonstrances of Hoche, they continued to advance. Their progress had not yet been heard or suspected; the deserters had communicated to them the pass-word; they killed the sentries, who had taken refuge in their boxes against the violence of the storm, and day-break saw the three-coloured flag waving on the western tower, where it had been placed by the traitors, too heedlessly trusted. Aided by them, the assailants were able to scale the walls; the brave and faithful Toulonese cannoniers were killed at their guns by their false associates, and the fort was in the hands of the republicans.

Total defeat of
the royalists.

At two o'clock in the morning the royalists were first apprized of their danger by the sound of artillery. A brave band was immediately collected, under the command of the Count de Sombreuil, and other distinguished officers; but, before they knew the extent of their misfortune in other respects, the aspect of the ocean, where the British fleet was struggling to maintain its station, and where the floating remains of boats and other craft proved the perils which had been encountered in endeavours to land, convinced them that no effectual succour could be derived from that quarter. When, ignorant of its surrender, they approached the fort, to their inexpressible consternation, the batteries were opened upon them; they found that Hoche had

captured their park of artillery, and was dispatching a force to intercept their passage to the sea shore. With heroic firmness, Sombreuil advanced to attack the enemy, and, although deficient in ammunition, gained a fort, in which he hoped to maintain himself until a retreat to the fleet could be effected. Increasing numbers pressed on to attack him on every side, the liberated prisoners deserted in a body, having first fired on their associates the muskets with which they were entrusted; but still the brave little band resisted the overbearing power, shouting, as if secure of victory, *Vive la France!* A corvette from the English fleet, which with great difficulty kept its station, galled the republicans with a destructive fire, and their unremitted efforts promised success, when shouts arose from the adverse party, "Lay down your arms, brave emigrants, we do not wish to harm you; we are all Frenchmen." Humbert strenuously expressed these sentiments, and a disposition was shewn to accede to the proposal. A treaty was commenced between Hoche and the royalist commander; but before it was commenced, the British corvette, at the entreaty of the royalists, desisted from firing. De Sombreuil concluded an arrangement with Hoche, in which most nobly he disclaimed, as to his own person, any benefits to be derived from it, heroically offering his own life as a sacrifice to save his companions. It was agreed that the emigrants should be free to re-imbark, and that the soldiers who had joined them should be prisoners of war, but with liberty to enrol in the armies of the republic. A dreadful scene ensued. Numbers of loyal individuals, who had set all their hopes on this enterprise, and who saw from its failure nothing but disgrace, misery, and danger, anticipated the evils they apprehended by self-destruction: crowds of men, old and young, of women, and even children, marched resolutely into the sea, and found, what under other circumstances would have been termed, an untimely death.

When the storm abated, and British boats could approach the shore, the emigrants prepared to depart, according to the treaty; but a fatal impediment arose.

Fatal end of
the expedition.

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August 9.

The government had sent to the army two commissioners, Tallien and Blad: the latter was a mere cypher; consequently the whole real authority devolved on Tallien. In him the demon which had incited him to the massacres in September, and prompted him in his pro-consulate at Bordeaux, no longer restrained by the better spirit which influenced his wife, raged with its wonted ferocity. He forbade the execution of the treaty; a military commission was established, and eight hundred new murders distinguished the career of this pretended champion of humanity and extirpator of the system of terror. Happily for a few, Tallien was recalled to Paris; his colleague, with ingenious humanity, directed the military commission to pass over all who had not attained the age of sixteen at the time of their emigration; and the tribunal extended its discretionary power over all who appeared to be young enough to claim its benefits, abstaining from inquiries into facts. It is added, that the execution of Tallien's bloody treachery was not confided to the brave men who had encountered the invaders in the field, but to Dutch and Belgian deserters, the outcasts of their country, and the refuse of mankind. The conduct of Hoche in this transaction has been the subject of much controversy. Sensible that his conduct was incapable of defence, he strenuously denied having acceded to any capitulation; the royalists assert the direct contrary. Republican writers* deny that any capitulation took place, and, in support of their opinion, cite a letter written by Hoche, and generally published, affirming that his honour as an officer is sufficient to repel the assertion. Of his bravery and conduct in the field no doubt can be entertained; but his veracity is certainly not to be deemed superior to that of the brave men who were sacrificed after believing in him. The facts, which are undisputed, incline the balance of credit strongly against him. In a tone of less confident denial, it is said that Hoche knew the law against emigrants too well, and had been himself too much

* Thiers, tom. vii. p. 518; *Victories et Conquêtes*, tom. iv. p. 229; *Dictionnaire des Batailles, &c.*, tom. iii. p. 355.

endangered on unfounded suspicions, again to risk his safety; that he never heard of any promise made by Humbert, and that the emigrants confided too rashly in the unauthorized cry of the republican soldiery*. This equivocating defence is too shallow to need refutation, and is best answered by the fact, that his own officers, sensible of the disgrace they should incur, refused to form the military tribunal. De Sombreuil, in his death, displayed a magnanimity which would have done honour to the proudest hero named in history. The Bishop of Dol and his clergy underwent the same fate, without sullyng their honour or disgracing their faith.

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1795.

Conduct of the
Count de
Sombreuil.

This may be considered as the last attempt of the royalists in favour of their sovereign. No effectual insurrection could afterward be made; small bands, under resolute leaders, may rather be celebrated as having done harm to the enemy than achieved benefit to any one. The English made an unsuccessful attempt on Noirmoutier and captured l'Isle Dieu; an acquisition of no importance in itself, but calculated to create alarm and oblige the republicans to employ a considerable force on the coast. A new pacification was at length effected, and the British fleet returned home.

Capture of
l'Isle Dieu.

In considering this most unfortunate expedition, the conduct of the British government has been assailed with vehement censure and exposed to malignant calumnies. It required only a slight exertion of a very mean intellect to represent that the delay in sending the reinforcement, under Lord Moira, and the precipitate advance of that which was employed, were injudicious; but it is to be recollected that French officers, royalists, and the agents of the princes, decided the time and manner of the first expedition, while, in less than a month, it was proved that, through jealousy among the officers, insubordination among the men, the rapacity of some and the treachery of others, no possible exertion could have made the objects of the

December 31.
Unjust reflections on the
British government.

* Thiers, tom. vii. p. 518; Dictionnaire des Batailles, &c. tom. iii. p. 555.

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expedition attainable. Many writers, both royalist and republican, imputed to the English government, or, in their brief condensation of it, to Mr. Pitt, views entirely perfidious. He never wished, they said, to restore the royal authority, but merely to foment such an insurrection as, by dividing Frenchmen against each other, would prevent the country from acquiring, under a stable and well-combined government, the importance which his national jealousy, inherited from his father, made him desirous to withhold*. Such charges are refuted by the whole conduct of government, from the time when they assigned to the emigrants arms, rank, and pay, to that in which, yielding to their importunities at a time of great national difficulty, so powerful and expensive an armament was equipped. These writers assert that the naval officers of France were permitted to engage in this service, that by their destruction England might be relieved from the fear that they would establish the naval, as the armies had the military, superiority of France; and that, when the royalists were engaged with Hoche, the British gunboats fired on them with no less animosity than on their opponents†. There may have been in France people who could be deceived by such absurdities; but all who are acquainted with the character of England must know that the superiority of her flag was never established or sustained but in fair and manly combat, and that, contrary to the practice observed by other nations, the men whose broadsides had sunk an enemy's ship were ever most active in their boats to save the lives of their enemies‡.

As, by the known law of France, a female could not ascend the throne, nor could a title to the crown

Liberation of
the daughter
of Louis XVI.

* Among many other writers, see *Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel*, tom v. p. 361.

† *Dictionnaire des Batailles*, tom. iii. p. 354, and many other works.

‡ In this narrative, I have chiefly followed Lacrételle, tome xii. p. 295, et seqq.; but I have consulted a large mass of histories and memoirs, particularly Thiers, tome vii. p. 466, et seqq.; *Victoires et Conquêtes*, tome iv. p. 180; *Dictionnaire des Batailles*, tome iii. p. 339; *La Vallée*, tome iii. p. 15; the first six chapters of Rivington's *Annual Register* for 1796; the *Moniteur*, and Debrett's *Collection of State Papers*.

be derived from one, the detention and ill-treatment of the Princess after the murder of her parents was a mere act of vulgar and wanton cruelty. At the present time, whether instigated by shame, visited by a transient gleam of humanity, or pursuing some scheme of undefined policy, the French government liberated their afflicted, oppressed, and innocent victim, the daughter of Louis the Sixteenth. After a considerable time spent in negotiation, she was secretly conveyed to Basle, and placed in the hands of her friends; the republic receiving in exchange the commissioners delivered up by Dumouriez, Drouet, the post-master, and Semonville and Maret, who had been arrested by the governor of Milan. Her Royal Highness was most graciously received at the imperial court: the Archduke Charles made her an offer of his hand; but, in performance of a promise made by her parents, she conferred it on the Duke d'Angoulême, son of the Count d'Artois*. The tardy act of humanity in the French government was distinguished by one of characteristic malignity. When the royal sufferer was about to depart, M. Carletti, Ambassador from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who had then concluded peace with France, as the only foreign ambassador representing a sovereign who was a relation of the daughter of Louis the Sixteenth, expressed a desire to pay her a visit of compliment. He received not only a rugged and brutal refusal, but a prohibition to transact business any longer with the rulers of the republic.

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1795.

November 27.

Turning our attention from the direct successors to the throne, on whom the first hopes of all true royalists would fix, it is only necessary briefly to notice the Orléans branch, to whose interests a large number of individuals were attached; but the chief of that family, after the ruin of his house, was an expatriated wanderer, leading a life of virtue and honour, but not attempting to head a party, for there was none capable of contending against the republicans and the legiti-

State of the
Orléans family.

* Rivington's Annual Register, vol. xxxviii. pp. *5, *18.

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XCIII.1795.
New constitu-
tion.

mate royalists who would have been equally adverse to his pretensions*.

Amid the difficulties of a depreciated currency, civil war and scarcity, the people imploring for bread and at the same time offering every species of obstruction to their labours, the Convention proceeded in the task they had assigned themselves. The formation of a new constitution was confided to a committee of eleven, amongst the most conspicuous of whom were Boissy d'Anglas, Cambacères, Syeyes, Louvet, and Lareveillière Lepaux. Without particularly adverting to their debates and differences of opinion, it may suffice to state that in the result of their deliberations many former errors were removed, although the system substituted was not free from great objections. Instead of a single legislative assembly, where in haste or in fear, without discussion, without freedom of debate, laws were passed and decrees of confiscation or of death enacted, two legislative bodies or chambers were created; the one, from its component number, called the Council of Five Hundred; the other, comprising half as many members, was styled the Council of An-

* The fate of two brothers of this prince, the Duc de Monpensier, and the Comte de Beaujolois, merits notice, although it forms no portion of this history. In pursuance of the decree of the Convention against their family, they had been imprisoned in the castle of St. John, at Marseilles. In the insurrection of royalists, by which the murders of the republicans were retaliated, their lives were in imminent jeopardy; but when that danger was over, their strict confinement was mitigated, and they planned a bold and daring escape. The Count de Beaujolois accomplished his design; but learned, when he was on the point of embarking for America, that the Duke, less fortunate than himself, had been recaptured in consequence of a fall from the wall of a fort by which he had broken his leg. Disdaining that liberty which his brother could not share with him, he returned and surrendered himself again a prisoner. Both were afterward liberated, and arrived in America; but their constitutions were impaired by the length and rigour of their confinement, and both were speedily consigned to the grave.—Lacréolles, tome xii. p. 2, p. 215. Alison, vol. ii. p. 565. It is proper in this to advert to a fact which before had escaped my recollection. Savary, Duc de Rovigo, in his *Memoirs*, tome ii. partie 2, p. 228, mentions that when he became Minister of Police, on the removal of Fouché, he discovered a voluminous collection of papers belonging to the Duc d'Orléans (*Egalité*), the perusal of which removed much of the prejudice he had previously entertained against that prince. He shewed the papers to Bonaparte, who declared his opinion that the Duke was not a wicked man; that he had been a tool in the hands of the leaders of the revolution, who committed him, for the purpose of obtaining supplies; and when once they had succeeded, their extortion knew no bounds. He ordered the papers to be destroyed; and there are, consequently, no means of deciding whether his judgment was rightly formed or not; but the anecdote ought not to be lost sight of, in justice to an individual whom all parties have attacked and condemned, and in whose favour no one has raised his voice.

cients. A member of the first assembly was to be full thirty years of age, during the last ten of which he must have been resident in the republic, or absent on mission from government. The Council of Ancients was to be formed of married men or widowers, forty years old at the least, having resided or been absent, as in the last case, fifteen years. Such were the deliberative bodies to which the making of laws was assigned; and it is to be remarked that no qualification in property was required from the members of either. Laws were to originate in the Council of Five Hundred, and to be approved or rejected by the Ancients. As an executive power, some were desirous of appointing a president, as in the United States of America; but it was finally settled that an executive directory of five members, having attained the age of forty, and already been members of one or other of the councils or ministers, should be established. One of them was to retire every year, and they were first to be nominated after a ballot by the legislative body, and in like manner approved by the Ancients.

One of the primary principles laid down in the code was, that every citizen had a right, immediately or mediately, to concur in the formation of laws, and in the nomination of representatives of the people and of public functionaries; but, in defiance of this apparently solemn declaration, the Convention, sensible of the contempt and hatred in which they were held, and apprehensive that most of them would be rejected on an appeal to the people, by two decrees, termed, in their style, of the fifth and thirteenth of Fructidor, ordered that two-thirds of the new councils should be composed of themselves, which, as they were reduced by the various events of the revolution to about six hundred and fifty persons, amounted to a declaration that nearly all of them should continue to be legislators.

The constitution and the decrees were first submitted to the armies, who received them with acclamations; but the people in the primary assemblies, although they gladly accepted the constitution, differed as to the decrees, which, in some places, obtained a

Obnoxious
decrees.

August 22-30.
Resistance to
them.

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Oct. 3.

sullen acquiescence, in others met with strenuous resistance. In Paris particularly, the opposition was loud and unmeasured; petitions of more than ordinary audacity were presented; the sections resounded with furious declamations, arms were appealed to, and, as a last resource, thirty thousand men were raised, led by General Danican, a brave officer, but not equal to the occasion. Apprehending forcible resistance, and instructed by their ignominious position during the late insurrections, the rulers collected in the neighbourhood of the capital five thousand regular troops, under General Menou; levied, as a civic force, fifteen hundred of the most desperate ruffians which the gaols and the highways could produce; men who gloried in the tenth of August, and had probably participated in the second of September; but their patrons styled them the sacred band, or the patriots of 1789. The insurgents were not, as on so many former occasions, merely the inhabitants of manufactories and workshops; many were undoubtedly of that class, but they were drawn out to aid some of the most considerable inhabitants of the city; their cry was, "Bread and the constitution of 1793." Heading a strong military body, Menou attempted to disarm the section formerly called des filles St. Thomas, afterward le Pelletier, inhabited by opulent and respectable persons; finding himself resisted, he most injudiciously entered into a parley, and withdrew his forces. This conduct occasioned general consternation in the Convention, when Barras dispelled fear, and influenced the fate of the day, together with that of France and of Europe, by an unexpected proposal: "I have the man you want," he said; "a little Corsican officer, whom I knew at Toulon; he is brave and skilful, and will not stand upon ceremonies."

Napoléon
Bonaparte
employed.

Napoléon Bonaparte was the individual thus suddenly called into important action; Menou was dismissed with disgrace and reproach, and only avoided punishment by the mediation of Barras, who took on himself the chief command, but performed nothing: the whole direction of the conflict being entrusted to

Bonaparte. His eagle eye discerned at once the extent of danger and means of defence, and, in a very few hours, he had established posts in all the avenues to the Tuileries, possessed himself of the bridges, to prevent co-operation between the sections lying on opposite sides of the river, and formed a strong reserve in the Place de Louis Quinze. Although much inferior to his opponents in numbers, he had the advantage of possessing two hundred pieces of artillery; while they, from the recent disarming, had none. 4. Confident in their numbers, and incapable of appreciating the means of resistance which had been so suddenly and efficaciously prepared, the insurgents advanced to invest the hall of the Convention, and obtain the revocation of the obnoxious decrees. The contest began in the rue St. Honoré, where Bonaparte, having established a strong post, with two guns at the Cul-de-sac Dauphine, opposite the church of St. Roch, saw with pleasure the national guard involving their long and dense columns in the narrow street. When they had established a body of grenadiers in front of the church, the troops in the Cul-de-sac opened a fire of musketry, grape and canister shot. The slaughter was swift and tremendous; the insurgents made every effort which ill-conducted bravery could suggest; but, after a conflict of an hour, in which several hundred lives were lost, they were dispersed, and all the eighty sections successively disarmed. The event is sometimes called the day of the sections; sometimes, from its name in the republican calendar, the treize Vendemaire. The Convention did not pursue its victory by any considerable acts of vengeance; the effect of the struggle was to prove that a small band of loyal soldiery was sufficient to restrain the turbulence of a great number of disaffected; and the sequel was, that it was very long ere riots in Paris were renewed*.

He suppresses
the Insurrec-
tion.

* The narrative of these transactions will be found, without any material variation, in all the histories of France, and the periodical works. The constitution is given in all the collections of state papers; among others, Rivington's Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. p. *268; Debrett's State Papers, vol. iii. part 2, p. 1; Peltier, Paris pendant l'Année 1795, tom. ii. p. 449; and for particulars relating to the insurrection, see *Les Brigands démasqués* par Auguste Danican; the *Life*

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1796.

France had now been six years engaged in a series of revolutions, with a continual profession of seeking to establish liberty; yet there had never been a moment in which the nation could justly be termed free: there never had been a time when every man might declare his opinion, publish his judgment, worship his Maker, or hold his property, without fear of the lamp-iron, the musket, the flood, or the guillotine. The new constitution completely overthrew the fabric of a democratic republic, but afforded no substitute under which true freedom might be sustained by the strength of a well-constructed and efficient government, with permanent, defined, and undisputed authority. From the appeal being first made to the army, it might easily be seen that Mr. Burke's prophecy of an irresistible military ascendancy was certainly and speedily to be accomplished.

25th.
End and character of the Convention.

The executive Directory.

At the time appointed for the new government, the Convention ceased to be a legislature, and never did an assembly carry with it a greater portion of contempt and detestation*. But the Convention may be said rather to have transmigrated than died, since two-thirds of the legislative bodies, without a pretext of election, or a show of representation, were filled by their own authority, and, as a specimen of the chicane and dishonesty with which the new system of govern-

of Bonaparte by Sir Walter Scott, vol. iii. p. 66; and most particularly Montholon, vol. iii. p. 63, on information derived from Napoléon himself.

* Prud'homme, a fierce and sanguinary writer, who had, in 1789, signalized himself as author of a Journal called *Les Révolutions de Paris*, and whose prepossessions, as Mr. Alison observes, led him to any thing rather than an exaggeration of the horrors of the popular party, gives (*Histoire des Erreurs, &c.* tom. vi. p. 512, and *Tableau général*) this abstract of the acts of the Convention: "Its sittings continued thirty-seven months and four days, during which time 11,210 laws were enacted, and 360 conspiracies and 140 insurrections denounced; 18,613 persons were put to death by the guillotine. The civil war at Lyons cost 31,200 men; that at Marseilles 729. At Toulon 14,325 were destroyed: and, in the re-actions in the South, after the fall of Robespierre, 750 individuals perished. The war in La Vendée is computed to have caused the destruction of 900,000 men, and more than 20,000 dwellings. Impressed with images of terror, 4790 persons committed suicide; and 3400 women died in consequence of premature deliveries; 20,000 are computed to have died of famine, and 1550 were driven to insanity. In the colonies, 124,000 white men, women, and children, and 60,000 people of colour, were massacred; two towns, and three thousand two hundred habitations, were burnt. The loss of men in the war is estimated, though probably below the real truth, at 800,000."

ment was to be carried on, the majority of the Council of Five Hundred acquired the nomination of the Directors by a trick. They sent a list of fifty persons to the Council of Ancients; forty-five were men so obscure and insignificant, that there could be no probability of their being chosen; consequently, the Council of Ancients were, with some expressions of discontent, obliged to return the five whom the other body had placed at the head of the list*. They were Barras, Rewbell, Laréveillière Lepaux, Letourneur de la Manche, and Syeyes; but, the latter declining the office, Carnot was substituted: every one of them had voted for the death of the King. Barras was of a noble family of Provence, nephew of a naval officer who had distinguished himself in the American war, of a noble aspect and dignified manner; his magnificent style of living, and restoration of ancient manners, soon exposed him both to applause and censure. Rewbell was an avocat of Colmar in Alsace, a man of ability, but not celebrated as an orator; his strong German accent being irreconcilable to the French ear; but, in the Directory, it soon became visible that, although Barras was the apparent head, Rewbell was the real leader. Laréveillière Lepaux was hunch-backed and club-footed, feeble and shallow, aiming to found an anti-christian sect, called Theophilanthropists, but little regarded by any. Letourneur was a man of such slender ability, that his election could only be attributed to caprice: he was an officer of engineers, and had made an attempt to translate Shakspeare. Superior to all these in talent, and by the benefits he had rendered to his country, was Carnot: his name has already occurred so often, that a recapitulation of his services is unnecessary; a greater contrast could not be invented than that which distinguished his practical usefulness from the speculative-ness of Syeyes, for whom he was substituted†. These

* Thiers, tom. viii. p. 80.

† These slight delineations are derived from Montholen, vol. iii. p. 84, repeated, with slight variations, by Las Cases; *Journal of the Private Life of Napoleon at St. Helena*, vol. ii. part 4, p. 134; Lacrételle, tom. xiii. p. 1; Thiers,

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Conduct of the
new
government.

directors were habited in gorgeous fancy dresses; had apartments in the palace of the Luxembourg splendidly furnished, and gave audiences, seated on gilt chairs, resembling thrones: so utterly extinguished was the spirit of *sans-culotte* equality; so practically was refuted the republican jargon which four years before had been uttered by Condorcet, Couthon, Cha-bot, and philosophers of that class*. The Council of Ancients held its sittings at the Tuileries; that of Five Hundred at the Palais Bourbon.

Considering the stations from which they had been called, and their probable prospects in life, the elevation of these men must have been highly gratifying to them; but a steady view of their duties and their dangers was calculated to create alarm and apprehension. They had to fear the machinations of two parties, opposed to each other, but no less so to them; the royalists and the furious democrats, who not merely deplored the fall of Robespierre, but wished to revive the system of terror, who claimed the equal division of all property among the people, and the abolition of all distinctions, obliging every one to contribute to the general good by the labour of his hands†. To the intrigues and concealed operations of the royalist party the directors opposed vigilance and the terror resulting from the ill success which had hitherto awaited their attempts; the others they met by the employment of spies, who, seeming to enter into their views, disclosed all their projects and their means. To gratify this party, the government made a delusive shew of extreme rigour toward the royalists: publishers of their sentiments were doomed to death, and not executed, while individuals under prosecution walked unmolested and undisguised about the capital; but the tenth of August was kept with its usual ceremonies; a decree was passed that the twenty-first of January

tom. viii. p. 78; La Vallée, tom. iii. p. 3; and several slight or occasional publications: les Brigands démasqués; les Cinq Hommes; Carnot's Reply to Bail-leul, &c.

* See vol. v. p. 52.

† Buonarotti's History of Babœuf's Conspiracy, with the Appendixes and the authorities referred to.

should always be celebrated as a high festival throughout the republic; and, on its first return, the directors, in great state, presented themselves in the Champ de Mars, and took the oath of hatred to royalty.

From these operations of delusion and insincerity, some temporary relief to anxiety might be obtained; but, to carry on public affairs, to supply the armies, to afford the means of food to the people, were operations almost beyond the reach of hope. From the days of Necker, when assignats were first issued*, the French government, acting on the profligate principle laid down by Franklin†, had gone on increasing the issue, until they nominally exceeded a thousand millions sterling. The inevitable result was depreciation to an incredible degree. While the law of maximum and the ambulatory guillotine were used as means to force goods from the proprietor, some kind of circulation could be enforced; but when these means were removed, exorbitant prices were demanded for all the necessaries of life. A vain effort was made to regulate the value of the paper by reference to the date of its emission; but at length its own worthlessness was so demonstrated, that a louis in gold, worth twenty francs, would produce, in assignats, seven thousand two hundred francs‡. Debtors tendered to their creditors this worthless rubbish at par; and landed proprietors, whose farms were let at £1000 sterling a year, found, that when thus paid by the tenants, the revenue of a twelvemonth hardly afforded the means of procuring a week's subsistence. Barter, as in the primitive state of society, was resorted to, as the only safe means of commerce; ladies and gentlemen, of elegant appearance, were daily employed in displaying specimens of goods, which they had to dispose of; and the legislators, with prudent selfishness, insisted on receiving their daily stipends in food, coffee, and other necessaries, instead of paper. The legislature endeavoured to change

Depreciation
of the
assignats.

* Vol. iv. p. 535.

† Vol. ii. p. 437. Vol. iv. p. 16.

‡ Revue Chronologique, p. 269.

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1795.
Mandats.

the aspect of affairs by substituting for the assignats a new kind of promissory paper, called mandats territoriaux; but, warned by experience, the people gave it no encouragement: it was discredited almost as soon as issued, and speedily put out of circulation*.

* All the histories, particularly Lacrételle, tom. xiii. livre 25me; Thiers, tom. viii. p. 86; and a multitude of pamphlets by Sir Francis d'Ivernois and others; and there is a clear and useful detail of the rise, progress, and fall of this fallacious scheme of paper money, in Alison, vol. ii. c. 19.

CHAPTER THE NINETY-FOURTH.

1793 to 1797.

State of military proceedings.—Peace with Tuscany.—War in Spain.—Peace with that country.—Holland.—Plunder and extortion.—New Constitution.—Alliance between the French and Dutch.—Advantages expected by France.—Dutch Convention.—Conquered countries annexed to France.—Embargo in England.—War.—Capture of Ceylon.—The Malaccas, and the Cape of Good Hope.—Inaction of the French Armies.—Pichegru becomes a royalist.—Proceedings of the imperialists—and of the French.—War in Italy.—Genoa.—Armistice.—Conduct of Prussia.—Negotiation at Basle.—Peace between France and Prussia.—Observations.—Views on Poland.—Diet of Grodno.—Constitution abolished.—Acts of Prussia.—Resistance.—Kosciusko leads an opposing force.—Martial operations.—Insurrection in Warsaw.—Conduct of the King.—Punishment of traitors.—Military operations of Prussia and Russia.—Defeat of the Poles.—Surrender of Cracow.—The Emperor joins the plunderers.—Efforts of Kosciusko.—Siege of Warsaw.—Bravery of the besieged—and of insurgents.—Retreat of the Prussians.—Defeat of Kosciusko.—Disasters of the Poles.—Capture of Praga.—Inhuman massacre. Surrender of Warsaw.—End of the contest.—Degradation of the King.—His abdication.—Final partition of the kingdom.

WHILE the French were thus arranging their domestic concerns, the operations of their armies, although always prosperous, were not conspicuous; but the course of events, the acts of other nations, and the

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skilful and judicious use which they made of their power and opportunities, enabled them to extend their dominion, convert their enemies into dependents or allies, and, by well-contrived compacts, to assure their future preponderance in the affairs of Europe.

1795.
February 9.
Peace with
Tuscany.

From the power or influence of Tuscany, little was to be apprehended. No conquests had been made on either side: engaged in the war against his will, the Grand Duke now restored the grain which he had seized*, and the conclusion of peace met with no obstacle. Overjoyed at this event, which, according to the expression of one of their writers, introduced the French republic into the system of Europe†, the Convention received the Tuscan minister with ostentatious ceremony, heard his speech with fervent acclamation, and honoured him with the fraternal kiss‡.

War in Spain.

After several battles and sieges in the Eastern and Western Pyrenees, the Spaniards, from being at first invaders, were reduced to the necessity of defending their own country, which they did with spirit and perseverance. Although the republicans were beset by contagious and other diseases, ill supplied with food, and, to a shocking degree, destitute of clothing, their energy in the field, and perseverance as besiegers never failed, and they had established themselves in several towns within the Spanish frontier.

Peace with
that country.

A disposition to peace was gaining ground in Spain: the cause which first animated her ceased with the extirpation of the royal family; resentment against their murderers subsided; she felt no sympathy in the interests and pursuits of other powers; and a never-dying jealousy of the commercial and naval ascendancy of England was sustained by the events of the war, and the acquisition of colonial possessions, while every successful exploit at sea brought back a bitter recollection of the destruction of the French fleet and arsenal at Toulon. The lead in the councils of Spain had

* See vol. v. p. 507.

† *Revue Chronologique*, p. 244.

‡ Histories in general. Thiers, tome vii. p. 331. Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. p. 336*. Debrett's and other collections.

fallen to a man, said to have been of low origin, named Emanuel Godoy, who owed his elevation to means the most odious and disgraceful, and who governed the affairs of the country under the title of Duke de Alcudia*. A negotiation was opened at Basle, and a treaty was speedily concluded. The French yielded up the towns and places they had conquered in Spain, possessions for which it was impossible to suppose an use or to create a desire; but they received in compensation a territory of the highest value and commercial importance, the Spanish portion of St. Domingo.

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1795.

July 22.

By the effect of late transactions, Holland was essentially united to the republic of France, although retaining the semblance of a separate government. When assured of the possession of the country, the French, of course, turned their thoughts to profitable spoil; but they could not use the means resorted to in Flanders: they had before them no shrines to plunder, no church lands to confiscate, no palaces of the wealthy to ransack, but were obliged, in a commercial country, to draw from the people their contributions in another form. They began by a proclamation, in which they described the "treacherous Stadtholder" as having lavished their blood and treasures for the vile purpose of supporting a confederacy of tyrants to enslave a brave people; acquitted the Batavians of any participation in the conspiracy; promised to preserve their independence, property, safety, and freedom of religious worship; and advised them to exercise their sovereignty by altering and modifying their form of government. As an explanation of this delusive mass of professions, the French rulers, for so they must be termed, having first secured the circulation of their assignats among the trades-people, demanded by a new proclamation, an enormous supply of victuals, apparel,

Holland.

January 20.
Plunder and
extortion.

27th.

* Such is the account generally given of him in the historical and biographical memoirs of the time. In a work, said to be written by himself, called *Memoirs of Don Manuel de Godoy*, a claim is advanced to high and ancient nobility, and the causes of his elevation are only obscurely hinted. He is termed in the *Memoires d'un Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 403, an insolent and rapacious favorite, entirely devoted to the interests of France.

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XCIV.

1795.

30th.

and cattle, to be delivered within a month*. This operation was immediately followed by a proclamation from the representatives of the French people, decreeing the confiscation of all goods, ships, and property belonging to governments at war with them, or to emigrants, or ecclesiastical persons, or deposited in trust by them; and all persons possessing such property were to give inventories, and were restrained from accepting bills of exchange or negotiating loans on pain of forfeiture and being dealt with as enemies of the French republic.

31st.
New
Constitution.

In the midst of all this tyranny, oppression, and plunder, the Dutch patriots prepared a public instrument of the new order of things, beginning, as if in self derision, with a declaration that equality, liberty, safety, property, and resistance to oppression, were the natural rights of man. They abolished the form of government confirmed in 1787, as obtained by force alone, and all hereditary dignities whatever. By subsequent proclamations, provision was made for the election of representatives and for other internal arrangements; and in another, for defence against attacks supposed to be meditated by England. Every inhabitant was commanded to contribute, in the space of a month, all his uncoined gold and silver or plate; spoons and forks, medals, and personal ornaments not exceeding in value three hundred florins (£22 10s.) excepted.

February 3rd
and 13th.Alliance be-
tween the
French and
Dutch.

In a widely different spirit, the King, according to the powers vested in him by acts of Parliament, issued an order in council, allowing the payment of all bills of exchange drawn or negotiated in Holland before the 16th of January, at dates not exceeding three months; but, to preclude all possibility of re-establishing their old system or renewing their ancient connexion with Great Britain, the new government concluded with the French republic a treaty of alliance, offensive and de-

May 15.

* 200,000 quintals of wheat, avoirdupoise weight; five millions of rations of straw; five million bushels of corn; 150,000 pair of shoes; 20,000 pair of boots; 20,000 coats and waistcoats; 40,000 pair of breeches; 150,000 pair of pantaloons; 200,000 shirts; 50,000 hats; and, within two months, 12,000 oxen.

fensive, which placed the United Provinces in a state of helpless subjection. France guaranteed to the Dutch their independence and the abolition of the stadtholdership; there was to be an alliance offensive and defensive against the enemies of the two republics during the war, and against Great Britain for ever. The Dutch were to furnish for the present campaign twelve ships of the line and eighteen frigates for the north sea and the Baltic, and half their troops were to be under the command of French generals. Arrangements for the campaign were to be made in concert; and the States General might send a deputy with a deliberative voice to the committee of public safety; their arsenals and ammunition were to be restored, and they were to retain all the immoveable effects of the House of Orange, and other immoveable property not already disposed of. As a counterpoise to this mockery of concession, the French claimed to themselves, as indemnities, Dutch Flanders and the right side of the Hondt, Maestricht, Venlo, and their dependencies; a French garrison was to be established in Flushing, in peace and in war, and, if necessary, in Breda, Bois-le-Duc, and Bergen-op-Zoom; and, besides other degrading stipulations, as a further consideration for the benefits conferred, the Dutch were to pay a hundred millions of livres (£4,666,666) in cash, or good bills on foreign houses*.

Syeyes boastfully announced to the National Convention the execution of this treaty. "The Thames," he said, "must regard with inquietude the future destinies of the Scheldt; London is too enlightened not to perceive that Bruges and Antwerp will acquire over its commerce the same superiority that our armies have gained over our enemies. The French republic, which, by the mere strength of its position, must act a conspicuous part in the Mediterranean, which, in the west and on the ocean, can oppose mighty forces against the English tyranny, acquires

May 23.
Advantages
expected by
France.

* Debrett's Collection of State Papers, vol. iii. part 1, p. 22*. Annual Register, vol. xxvii. page 34*, and various other periodicals and collections. Homme d'Etat, tome iii. p. 166.

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“ in the north, the only thing she wanted, a great and
“ superb naval and commercial existence. The union
“ of the French and Batavian republics already pro-
“ claims to the world,* that British tyranny must soon
“ be superseded by the liberty of the seas, which you
“ will have conquered, and which, great and magnani-
“ mous in your prosperity, you will impart to all man-
“ kind*.”

May.
Dutch Con-
vention.

The Dutch patriots convoked primary assemblies, to form a national Convention, just at the time when that form of government had been proved useless and destructive and was to be abolished in France. Beside the heavy sacrifices already enumerated, they consented to receive into their pay twenty-five thousand French troops; and they sent to Paris two ambassadors-extraordinary, with no real power but that of doing whatever their ally should command; and their ambassador at Vienna was directed to offer a mediation for peace, and, in case of its not being accepted, to quit the capital of Austria. The Prince of Orange issued a temperate, sensible, but, of course, unavailing proclamation. As the people of the United Provinces were not entirely alienated from their old affections, apprehensions were entertained of tumultuous risings against the new order of things; but, for the present, the ascendancy of French principles and French military power prevented any formidable display of resistance.

June 15.

March 28.

The National Convention of France, after a series of reports and speeches, establishing as principles that they had a right definitively to retain all countries which they held as conquests, and that there were certain points in mountains, seas, and rivers, particularly the Rhine, fixed by the hand of Nature to form the indisputable limits of their territory, decreed that all conquered countries on their side of the Rhine, all Belgium, and the state of Liège and Luxembourg, should be united to their republic.

October.
Conquered
countries
annexed to
France.

Embargo in
England.

Soon after the arrival of the Stadtholder, an embargo was laid on all Dutch ships in British ports;

* *Moniteur*, du 9 Prairial, an 3 (28 May 1795), p. 1004. *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 167.

and, in a few months, England issued a proclamation for reprisals against the United Provinces, which were thus involved in avowed and open hostilities, without power to exercise any free will or separate judgment, in respect to its prosecution, continuance, or termination*.

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September 15.
War.

If the Dutch really expected from their subjection to France any of the advantages proposed to them, they were, in all respects, miserably disappointed. Not only were they oppressed and plundered at home, but, at the command of their new masters, under pretence of rescuing the important island of St. Eustatia from the dominion of the Stadtholder, authorized by commissioners, the two republics expelled the governor and took possession of the island, which thus became in effect a French colony†.

Ceylon was feebly protected; its governor, attached to the Stadtholder, and hopeless, after the recent change, of obtaining large sums which he had advanced, entered into a negotiation, with the sanction of the Prince of Orange, for surrendering the portion of the island under his command to Great Britain. Commodore Rainier, with an adequate naval force and a body of Europeans and sepoys, under Colonel Stuart, sent on shore an order from the government of Colombo to the commander of Fort Oostenburg, to admit the English ships. No definitive answer being returned, active operations were commenced; but in their outset the Diomed man of war foundered on a rock near Pigeon Island. The next day, the troops were landed without opposition, ground was broken and trenches opened: after some not very strenuous resistance, a practicable breach was effected; and to prevent the threatened assault, the commander signed a capitulation, by which the whole sea coast, but not the entire island, was obtained. A portion of the territory remained, by treaty, under the government of the King of Candia, who made up for the smallness of his dominions and his want of force to maintain them,

Capture of
Ceylon.

August.

18th.

* Histories, State Papers in all periodicals and collections.

† Macpherson, vol iv. p. 451.

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The Malaccas,

and the Cape
of Good Hope.

Aug. 7.

September 16.

by the grandeur of his titles ; styling himself the Descendant of the Sun, the Offspring of the Lion, and the Ruler of the Slaves, whom others term the Sovereigns of the World. Without interfering with this wordy barbarian, the British gained by their conquest not only the valuable spices produced in the country, but a port of shelter from the storms which annually ravage the opposite coast of India, and an advanced military station, which in many contingencies of war might be of the highest importance. Malacca, Cochin, and the residue of the Dutch settlements on the continent of India yielded also without a struggle ; and thus, in this quarter of the world, was the power of Holland annihilated.

In the same period, the Cape of Good Hope was attacked by a British squadron, under Sir George Keith Elphinstone, and a military force led by Sir Alured Clarke. All the troops that were landed, regulars, seamen, and marines, amounted only to sixteen hundred, entirely destitute of artillery ; the enemy possessed a large train, and infinitely superior numbers of men ; but they consisted principally of hottentots and burgher militia. They had a camp at Muyzenberg, strongly placed and well fortified, flanked by a steep mountain on the right, and Simon's Bay on the left, the shores of which cannot easily be approached, because the water is shallow and the surf high. Due preparations having been made, Major-General Craig put his forces in motion, and Commodore Blanket assisted with his squadron. Difficulties and resistance were surmounted : the Dutch precipitately abandoned their camp, and with their artillery retired to a ridge of high rocks. A reinforcement of men, artillery, and provisions, under General Clarke, enabled the English to advance to the post of Wynberg, a tongue of land projecting from the Table Mountain. Governor Slyshens, alarmed at these appearances, sent to require a suspension of hostilities for forty-eight hours, that he might arrange terms of capitulation. Twenty-four hours were granted, at the conclusion of which the colony was surrendered, the garrison becoming pri-

soners of war. The value of this acquisition was great in itself; but more particularly as the loss of it left to our enemies no intermediate station at which their armaments intended for India could obtain supplies or succour*.

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During five months after the subjugation of Holland, the French armies of the Rhine and the Moselle remained in a state of surprising inaction. They were still commanded by Pichegru and Jourdan, and by the subordinate generals who had led them to glory, and who possessed their entire confidence. But, beside the difficulties which beset the government in Paris, a latent cause contributed to produce the effect. Pichegru, the brave and ardent leader, whose conduct had saved, and whose moderation in speaking of his own exploits, had adorned the republic, was now become a convert, or rather had regained his natural bias, toward royalty, and had entered into engagements for the restoration of his lawful sovereign. From the moment when he rescued the national Convention from the conspiracy of the Jacobins, and sent some of their leaders to Cayenne, he felt that he had acquired the implacable hatred of that faction. His disgust was increased by the penury to which he was condemned, and which he disdained to alleviate by acts of rapine and plunder. His pay, four thousand livres (£167) per month, when given in assignats, did not amount to two guineas a week. A negotiation, conducted on the part of the French princes by Fauche Borel, a printer of Neuchatel, terminated in the accession of the general to their interests: but, suspected and watched by the agents of the republic, he could not at once throw off the mask, especially as he had no reason to hope for the co-operation of his troops, and could only anticipate the fate of Dumouriez†.

Inaction of
the French
armies.

Pichegru
becomes a
royalist.

While the French armies were thus inactive, that of the Emperor was not more alert; not from the hope

* Rose, p. 232 et seqq. *Gazettes and Histories*.

† For particulars of the negotiation and arrangement, see *Memoire concernant la trahison de Pichegru*, par M. de Montgaillard; see also Lacrételle, tom. xiii. p. 80; Thiers, tom. vii. p. 461; *Victoires et Conquêtes*, tom. iv. p. 113, 276; tom. v. p. 2.

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of any result from that transaction, for it is said to have been utterly disapproved of by General Wurmser*, and never authoritatively sanctioned by his government. The imperial army was recruited and reinforced; but jealousies and fears, personal interests and a disgraceful confederacy, prevented any generous effort or strenuous exertion. The reduced state of the French army, through want and desertion, did not incite their adversaries to any useful enterprize. After some obstinate and destructive skirmishes, Jourdan captured the town of Luxembourg, but Marshal Bender obtained favourable terms of capitulation†. After a long period of inaction, Jourdan unexpectedly crossed the Rhine, and attacked Dusseldorf, which was evacuated, the Austrians retreating toward Lahn, harassed by the enemy. At the same period, Pichegru crossed the Rhine near Mannheim, which he took, and prosecuted the siege of Mentz, which had long been blockaded, and the scene of some bloody conflicts‡. Clerfaye was advancing with a considerable force to effect a junction with Wurmser; and Pichegru, to prevent this operation, gave battle to the latter general; at first he had the advantage, but was finally defeated and driven back into Mannheim.

June 7.

September.

Sept. 20.

25th.

Oct. 13.

November.

According to an arranged plan, Jourdan crossed the Main, and invested Mentz; but Clerfaye fell suddenly on his rear, captured his artillery, raised the blockade, and pursued him in his retreat to Dusseldorf. Both the French generals were compelled to recross the Rhine; but Pichegru left a strong garrison in Mannheim, which was finally recaptured. The Austrian armies united, regained also the Palatinate and the whole country between the Rhine and the Moselle; but were disappointed in an effort to penetrate to Luxembourg.

War in Italy.

In Italy, the war, although not distinguished by brilliant achievements, was favourable to the French: General Scherer gained some advantages in the straits near the Riviere di Ponente; the peace with Spain gave

* Lacrételle, tom. xiii. p. 89.

† Victoires et Conquêtes, tom. iv. p. 150.

‡ Ib. p. 118.

reason to hope for ample reinforcements; and the republicans were in possession of all the summits of the Alps, from the borders of the lake of Geneva to the county of Nice. Both parties were occupied in strengthening their positions; the French at Borghetto and Albenza, their opponents at Dego; while General Dewins extended his redoubts over the heights which cover Savona and Vado.

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Genoa, whose neutrality had already been violated by the French, was threatened by all parties; the ports were blockaded by an English fleet, and all provisions destined for the army of Italy intercepted. The French, at length, made an attack on the whole Austrian line, and, after several well-contested actions, obtained possession of La Pietra, Loano, Finale, Vado, and considerable magazines which the Austrians had amassed in Savona. They might have made themselves completely masters of the Apennines; but the Emperor and the King of Sardinia sent reinforcements, and secured the advantageous positions. After many difficulties, an armistice was agreed to on the banks of the Rhine; and, although the stipulations were not expressly extended to Italy, the season compelled the observance of a truce in that quarter.

Genoa.

Nov. 17.

Armistice.

Dec. 31.

In contemplating these events, we look with astonishment at the conduct of the King of Prussia. The high and generous feeling of family affection and political justice, which, a few years before, had induced him to make such distinguished and successful exertions in behalf of the Stadtholder*, was now extinct, and, without an effort, either of arms or of negotiation, he saw him deposed, despoiled, banished, proscribed, his property plundered, and his dominions surrendered. To a request of assistance, the answer was, that the interests of his Prussian Majesty forbade it†. While these acts were in progress, under the semblance of making arrangements for the exchange of prisoners, he negotiated a treaty of peace with the French republic.

Conduct of
Prussia.

* See vol. iv. p. 276.
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† Homme d'Etat, tom. iii. p. 121.

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Negotiation at
Basle.

Jan. 22.

Seeing the enemy on the Rhine, and apprehensive for his own dominions, he had effected a truce with Pichegru; and to save his pride from the avowal of defeat, and the appearance of humiliation, he easily obtained from the French the concession that negotiations should be carried on at Basle, a neutral territory; and powers were there exchanged between Count Goltz, who had, for several years, been envoy extraordinary from Prussia to Louis the Fifteenth and his successor, on his part, and M. Barthélémy, their ambassador in Switzerland, on that of the republic. If the discussions were protracted through several months, the delay was not occasioned so much by the difficulty of arranging terms, as by contrivances for preserving secrecy and eluding or misdirecting observation. The principal mover in the politics of Prussia was Prince Henry, brother of Frederick the Great, who, resenting what he considered the indifference or neglect of his nephew, the reigning monarch, opposed the war, and, shewing himself adverse to all its operations, was, by many, considered as a revolutionist*.

April 5.
Peace between France
and Prussia.

Goltz having died before the terms were finally arranged, the conclusion of the treaty devolved on Baron Hardenberg, then a cabinet minister and afterward highly exalted in the Prussian councils. Two compacts, dated on the same day, stipulated a cessation of all hostilities between the French republic and the King of Prussia, both in his royal capacity and as elector of Brandenburg, and prescribed certain lines of demarcation, beyond which the troops of the belligerent powers were not to be permitted to pass; and to effect this end, the two contracting parties were to keep, on the most essential points, armies of observation. The French retained the provinces which had fallen into their hands on the left of the Rhine; and, as the King of Prussia separated himself from the general German confederacy, the French agreed to accept his good offices in favour of the provinces and

* Homme d'Etat, tom. viii. p. 9.

states of the German empire, who should desire to enter into negotiation with them through that medium*.

Thus, as the French exultingly observed, "the nucleus of the coalition was broken: thus was their republic most authoritatively acknowledged, and thus the ambitious desire entertained ever since the days of Richelieu, of making the Rhine their boundary, was, in effect, conceded by one of their greatest opponents." The conduct of Frederick William has met with much deserved censure; reasoning from subsequent events, it would be pronounced no less adverse to his interest than to his honour; but his apparent interest at the time strongly recommended his proceedings; and he was not without some excuse on the ground of honourable feeling. His generous sentiments and heroic aspirations, in the campaign of 1792, had been checked and thwarted through the indecision and selfishness of his great allies. The Emperor could not be induced to agree in any magnanimous effort for the liberation and restoration of Louis the Sixteenth; his ambitious eagerness to repossess provinces which had been separated from his dominion nearly a century and a half by a solemn treaty†, had not only impeded the success, but tarnished the glory of their arms; and the King had more ground for apprehension in an overwhelming greatness of the house of Austria, than in the uncertain results of the growing power or encroaching opinions of France. He might, therefore, watch with prudent jealousy the attempts of his dangerous ally, and prevent an accession of power which might be turned to his destruction. These and some other motives of prudence and self-defence might have been alleged as accounting for his conduct; but, in fact, Frederick William was impelled and governed

* For the treaties, see Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. *339, and all the Collections: for the motive of the course of negotiation, *Homme d'Etat*, tom. iii. p. 76 to 136; and, for some further information and judicious observations, *History of the Causes and Effects of the Confederation of the Rhine*, by the Marquis Lucchesini, p. 11.

† That of Westphalia, executed 24th Oct. 1648.

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Views on
Poland.

by a design in the highest degree dishonourable and unjust, and which was carried into effect with disgraceful and ruthless perseverance.

Maimed as she was by the last dismemberment*, Poland still presented a desirable prey to cupidity and ambition. Austria had benefited nothing by the late spoliation, but was anxious to gain that which might form a counterpoise to the acquisitions of Russia and Prussia; the Emperor could not remain a quiet spectator, while the two sovereigns, whose growing power he had so much reason to guard against, possessed themselves of the residue of that unfortunate kingdom.

1793.

Nov. 25.
Diet of
Grodno.Constitution
abolished.

After the signature of the treaties with Russia and Prussia, a diet, devoted to those powers, was assembled at Grodno, and, by directions from the assembly, they formally abolished the late constitution, and the measures adopted under its sanction, declaring that the acts of the diet which framed it had caused all the calamities of the state and the loss of immense provinces; and the King was made personally, and in abject terms, to disclaim all that he had before promised relative to the regal succession. All the ancient institutions, so ruinous to the interests of the republic, were thus revived, and, among others, the permanent council, to which the Russian minister, Ingelstrom, constantly addressed, in the shape of notes, the mandates of Catherine. He was the general commanding the Russian forces in Poland, and, by his command, the army of the state was reduced to fifteen thousand men. Yet, injured and indignant as they were, the Polish peasantry and people repulsed the insidious attempts made by Jacobin emissaries to lure them into the adoption of their principles and mode of conduct. Oppression alone produced resistance, and a struggle, interesting to every liberal feeling, although its final result was most unhappy.

Acts of
Russia.

Resistance.

Madalinski, who had been recalled from the Austrian military service when the new constitution was established, witnessed, with the anguish of a patriot,

* Vol. v. p. 184 to 198.

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its present overthrow. When his brigade was disbanded, he proceeded, with fourscore associated gentlemen, to the palatinate of Sandomia, where the nobility were ready to join them; and, although they could not suddenly array a force sufficient to cope with that of Russia, they continued, with four thousand men, to harass and alarm Ingelstrom. The Russian general applied to the permanent council for the aid of the Polish troops; but they, judiciously considering that, under all circumstances, these men were more likely to co-operate with, than to oppose their countrymen, did not issue the order. Ingelstrom then required them to strike terror by arresting all suspected persons, without distinction of rank or sex; but the council alleged that such an act would be contrary to the laws of Poland. The Russian then lodged fifteen thousand of his troops in Warsaw, to keep possession of the city and secure the person of the King: the people made a riot; and some, most imprudently and contrary to the sense of the patriot leaders, displayed the emblem of Jacobinism, the red cap.

Ingelstrom had but just left Cracow for Warsaw, when Kosciusko presented himself at the head of between three and four thousand men. Several Palatinates promised to join him; and, at an assembly held for that purpose, a firm, energetic, yet temperate, declaration of insurrection was prepared, and a provisional government established. In the church of St. Mary, they read the constitution of 1791; and swore, on the altar, to maintain it at the sacrifice of their fortunes and their lives. A proclamation was also issued, inviting the nation to form, with all speed, a general confederation; and exposing, with just severity, the conduct of Russia and Prussia, while it noticed with respect that of Austria, which was considered as a friendly power. This tribute was tendered in vain. The Austrian minister at Warsaw repudiated it as an attempt to represent the Emperor as secretly favouring an insurrection which he abhorred, as proclaiming and adopting the monstrous principles and sanguinary proceedings of the French Convention. The ministers of

Kosciusko
leads an
opposing force.
1794.
March 23.

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Martial
operations.

the other two powers required from the council formed by Russia the speedy and exemplary punishment of the revolt; and Stanislaus was forced to proclaim his disavowal of his loyal subjects, and to reiterate against them the unfounded reproaches of their enemies.

Meanwhile, Kosciusko was not only joined by the common people and the peasantry, but two hundred students in the University of Cracow placed themselves in the ranks. To give to the insurrection a name of rebellion, the Russians ventured to send against Kosciusko two squadrons of the Polish army, and afterward a battalion of the regiment of Waldziki; but, when put in motion, they joined their countrymen. A Russian division of four battalions, a regiment of Cossacks, and one of light horse, under General Tormasow, was encountered near Raslawice, on the left bank of the Vistula, by a numerous body of insurgents, chiefly armed with clubs and scythe blades. In irresistible crowds they rushed on the cannon, turned them, and drove the Russians from the field, with a loss of four hundred men, two officers of rank, and half their artillery.

Insurrection
in Warsaw.

April 17.

In Warsaw, placards began to be exhibited, inciting the people to throw off the galling yoke of foreigners. Ingelstrom wrote to hasten the march of the Prussian troops; and in all parts the Polish military were being disarmed: the Russian general having reduced his force by sending a strong detachment against Kosciusko, the secret leaders of the insurrection seized the opportunity to begin their operations. In various conflicts they were victorious: Ingelstrom, brave, and dreading disgrace, maintained his position even after hope of success had vanished; the streets were barricaded and commanded by cannon, while riflemen, placed in the houses, dealt destruction from the windows, and huge stones were thrown from the roofs. The Russian, having burnt as many as he could of his ministerial papers, was obliged at last to evacuate the city; and the insurgents, without difficulty, re-established perfect order. A provisional council of

18th.

19th.

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1794.

Conduct of the
King.

regency, formed of eight nobles and six citizens, declared their adherence to the insurrection at Cracow: they sent a deputation to the King, assuring him of their respect and attachment, and prayed him to favour their undertakings, and not to quit the capital. Stanislaus answered that he had never intended to leave Warsaw; that he had always acted in conformity with the opinion of the majority of the people; but, during the course of a life chequered with woes and disasters, he had never before seen the whole nation so happily united in one single and powerful will; and he argued from the circumstance a permanent prosperity. He exhorted them to confute their enemies, who accused them of Jacobinism, by shewing their respect for religion, property, the distinctions of rank, and the throne; and recommended to their attention several important subjects, particularly subsistence and police, and the repression of acts of plunder and cruelty. All these directions were punctually complied with: the Prussian minister was protected by a military guard; and polite attention was paid to two Russian princesses who resided in Warsaw; the suppressed orders of knighthood were publicly and ceremoniously re-established on the following Sunday, being Easter, with a grand Te Deum, at which the King assisted.

Punishment of
traitors.

In the imperfect destruction of his papers, Ingelstrom had left uninjured several, which showed the conduct of certain nobles in favouring the views of the spoilers of their country, in the preceding partitions, and up to the present day. The people clamoured for vengeance; but the Provisional Council insisted that the formalities of law should be rigidly observed. On the report of a committee of twenty-one, Wenceslaus Rogozinski was tried and condemned; but his sentence was not even published until the opinion of the King should be declared. With more compliance with popular feeling and less attention to the forms of justice, Kossakowski, already mentioned* as one of the chief promoters of the confederacy of Targowitz, and who

* Vol. v. p. 192.

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June 27.

bore a commission in the Russian army as General-in-Chief of Lithuania, was irregularly brought to trial before the Council of Wilna, a tribunal not invested with any judicial authority, found guilty, and hanged. A similar fate attended the Bishop Kossakowski, Rogozinski, and three other eminent adherents to the Russian cause: an inscription placed on the gallows denoted that it was the punishment of traitors to their country. One hundred and fifty persons were arrested; the city guard surrounded the municipal mansion, erected gibbets before the door, and required that the guilty should be brought forward to expiate their offences; but the president Zakrzewski firmly refused, and caused the gibbets to be removed: they were replaced, the prison forced, and eight victims taken out and instantly executed. Kosciusko strenuously reprobated these acts, treating them as attempts of the oppressors of his country to Jacobinize his righteous cause.

Military operations of
Prussia and
Russia.

In this crisis, Prussia was marshalling a numerous army, with a powerful artillery, to be commanded by the King in person. The Empress, not hesitating to designate the brave men who struggled for the liberty of their country, rebels, sent against them a reinforcement of more than forty thousand men, under Generals Demisow, Fersen, and Suworow. These troops, in their progress, committed barbarous excesses, which were met by savage retaliation. All eyes were turned toward Kosciusko, who, under every disadvantage, with a force very inadequate both in men and in artillery, maintained a conflict, which, although not crowned with success, must transmit his name with radiant honour to posterity. He was attacked, near Sielce, by an united Russian and Prussian army, who outflanked him; and, after a gallant resistance of four hours, drove him from the field, with the loss of many men and eleven or twelve pieces of artillery. Another engagement took place almost immediately afterward, near Chelm; it lasted six hours, and terminated in a manner equally disadvantageous to the Poles.

June 6.
Defeat of the
Poles.

8th.

12th.
Surrender of
Cracow.

As the Prussians now, for the first time during this

contest, appeared in arms, the National Council addressed a proclamation to the inhabitants of Polish Prussia, exposing the conduct of that government, and the false and contradictory character of the proclamations which it had issued. Frederick William did not answer this paper, but proceeded to the attack of Cracow, which was soon surrendered, although not a shot had been fired, nor had the Prussians yet brought up any besieging artillery. The treachery which occasioned this surrender was made indisputable, when General Winiaski, who had been intrusted with the command, abandoned, almost immediately, the cause of his country and joined the Russians.

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1794.

14th.

While the people of Poland were thus beset by two overpowering enemies, a third made his appearance. The Emperor took Sandomir, and invaded the palatinates of Lublin and Chelm. This aggression was void even of the slight pretences with which such acts are sometimes coloured : it was not more repugnant to good faith than to good policy. The only plausible reason to be assigned was the desire of the Emperor to gain possession of Cracow, which, if left in the hands of Prussia, would render that kingdom too powerful, and to gain a counterpoise by more extended acquisitions.

The Emperor
joins the
plunderers.

Kosciusko, measuring his exertions by his duty rather than his hopes, directed the people in the frontier palatinates to collect their utmost armed force, to carry invasion into the country which had been gained by the enemy, and particularly to assist insurgents in all parts. In Lithuania, serious insurrections had broken out ; and, encouraged by the success of those at Wilna, the Poles penetrated into Courland, captured Liebau, and found the people in general disposed to throw off the Russian yoke. Dantzic evinced the same disposition with regard to Prussia ; but their spirit was shewn in vain. Forty thousand Russians overran Lithuania ; Wilna was recaptured by Suworow, and Lithuanian blood unsparingly shed. Liebau was soon subdued ; and the King of Prussia, by pre-

Efforts of
Kosciusko.

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Siege of War-
saw.

August 2.

22nd.

28th.
Bravery of the
besieged,

cautions and by terror, repressed the spirit which was rising in Dantzick.

Kosciusko was obliged to concentrate his force in and about Warsaw, where the combined invaders were determined to finish the war. The whole Prussian heavy artillery had arrived ; and Schwerin, who commanded it, after an obstinate resistance, captured a strong redoubt between Wola and Warsaw. The Russians having taken a position on the right of their allies, a summons was sent to demand the surrender in twenty-four hours ; and the King of Prussia announced to Stanislaus that non-compliance would cause and justify all the dreadful extremities which must fall upon the inhabitants of an open town, which by its obstinacy provoked the horrors of a siege and the vengeance of two armies. In answer, Stanislaus deprecated the threatened severities, alleging, with truth, that the position of Kosciusko left not to the people of Warsaw the power of determining the question of surrender or resistance. Unawed by threats, the Poles distinguished themselves in several gallant exploits. A formidable insurrection broke out at Koster, headed by Nimojewski. At Syrem, they captured magazines and military chests, and at Wroclawek carried off a convoy of ammunition intended for the siege of Warsaw. Their force increased as they marched ; and even when they penetrated into Silesia, destroyed magazines and took a convoy of cattle destined for the camp, the inhabitants added recruits to their army. Kosciusko detached Madalinski, with fifteen hundred cavalry and four battalions of infantry, to their aid ; but they were driven back with the loss of nearly eight hundred men : thus were the insurgents left to themselves, while they were daily harassed by regular troops.

General Dombrowski defeated the Prussians before Warsaw, obliging them to abandon their batteries, after losing, in a well-contested fight, a great number of men. The inhabitants behaved with the utmost heroism. Without distinction of rank, or sometimes

even of sex, they were seen to accompany the battalions, rush upon the batteries, and spike the cannon: priests, monks, Jews, Greeks, and Mussulmen, co-operated in these exploits. Immense supplies and artillery, coming up the Vistula for the besiegers, were destroyed by the spirit and contrivance of a canon, aided by citizens, servants, and peasants, who defeated the guard and sunk the convoy in the river.

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A new insurrection at Posen, in the rear of the besieging army, gave much alarm to Frederick William. His troops had suffered severely from combats, sickness, and desertion. Men had been confederated, and depots of arms, ammunition, provisions, and clothing formed in separate forests, without the least intelligence being conveyed or suspicion excited. In one day, the explosion took place on thirty different points: detachments of the enemy, cut off from mutual support, were compelled to retreat, or killed, or captured. Rich proprietors fell into the ranks like humble peasants. Sobronowski, at the head of a picked squadron, advanced toward Bamburg and Thorn. The King of Prussia, thus compelled to raise the siege of Warsaw, commenced his retreat in the night, harassed by the Polish troops, who took from him large quantities of stores, ammunition, and forage: he revenged himself on the helpless inhabitants of the country; thus abandoning, without honour or advantage, an enterprize commenced in defiance of justice and good faith. Madalinski penetrated into that part of Poland denominated Western Prussia, took several places, and was joined by Dombrowski, whose presence was not deemed necessary at Warsaw.

and of
insurgents.

September 6.
Retreat of the
Prussians.

No longer entertaining apprehensions from the Prussian army, Kosciusko attempted to aid the people of Lithuania in expelling the Russians, who were in formidable numbers, headed by Suworow. This general had already sustained two obstinate engagements with Sierakowski, in which no signal advantage accrued to either side, to compensate for a profuse effusion of blood. He was preparing for a third attack, when he learned the approach of Kosciusko. The

Defeat of
Kosciusko.

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XCIV.

1794.
Oct. 10.

Disasters of
the Poles.

26th.

Capture of
Praga.

Inhuman
massacre.

Polish general, to prevent his union with Fersen, fought a battle near Mareiowice, between ten and twelve leagues from Warsaw, in which he was defeated with great loss of men, three generals, a hundred inferior officers, and twenty-one canon, and was himself dangerously wounded, and made prisoner.

From this time, nothing but disaster attended the Poles. Poniatowski, sensible that all hopes from the insurrections must fail, if the enemy were once in possession of the capital, repaired with fifteen thousand men to the suburb of Praga. After the Poles had sustained defeat, with great loss, in several well-contested actions, Denissow and Fersen having united with Suworow, a battle gained by them near the suburb of Praga, afforded to its inhabitants a sure and melancholy presage of their impending fate.

Praga was well fortified; more than a hundred cannon were mounted on thirty-three batteries: they had nearly twelve thousand regular troops, among whom, and among a numerous population, the best spirit prevailed. They expected a regular siege; but Suworow remembered Ismail, and, promising his troops two days of unrestrained plunder, ordered an immediate assault. For two hours, the defence was gallantly maintained, and the Russians suffered severely; but three divisions having penetrated into the place, the rest speedily followed: a sanguinary conflict ensued: the assailants, stimulated as they were by hope of plunder, could not be resisted; they prevailed, and ten thousand inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex, were barbarously murdered in the streets or in their own houses: many endeavoured to escape into the city; but the bridge, damaged by the artillery, broke down, and they perished in the Vistula. The brave troops would not lay down their arms to any but the general in chief; he appeared, accepted their submission, and, after a few days, sent them into Warsaw; while from the streets of Praga were removed eighteen thousand human bodies.

This tremendous example struck terror into a large

portion of the inhabitants of Warsaw, who desired an immediate capitulation; others were anxious to defend their liberty and their beloved constitution to the last, even when hope no longer could cheer their prospects. Stanislaus wished to treat; but the troops and Wawreski, their commander, were still desirous to try the fate of arms. Ignatius Potocki, whose patriotism could not be doubted, was referred to, and he decided on negotiation, as a course not to be avoided. To him was assigned the painful task of waiting on the victor, and the still more painful necessity of hearing the sentiments of Catherine; a mixture of pride, injustice, and falsehood. He proposed to treat on behalf of the republic; Suworow answered, that the Empress was not at war with the republic, her troops were only employed to reduce to subjection those Poles, who, by taking up arms, had disturbed the public repose; in fine, he refused to confer with any who were not invested with authority to treat in the name of the King. Three municipal magistrates were then dispatched; the surrender of Warsaw was agreed on, and, when they required an assurance of safety to persons and property, the Russian general said, "There is one thing forgotten; but I grant it with the rest,—an oblivion of the past."

One of the terms engrafted on this capitulation was, that the people should give up their arms; to this cession, Wawrenski and a few others would not agree: after some negotiation, they were permitted to quit Warsaw, but with a menacing assurance that they would be met with elsewhere, and no quarter granted. The noble conduct of this general formed a powerful contrast with that of Stanislaus, who consented to retain, under such humiliating circumstances, a crown which he ought never to have worn, and which he ought long before to have abdicated. The capitulation was formally published by the magistrates, and, on the following day, Suworow took possession, while the brave and proud, although unfortunate, defenders of their country retired, amid the prayers and blessings of the people. The troops under Wawrenski made

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1794.
Surrender of
Warsaw.

Nov. 7.
End of the
contest.

8th.

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1794.

some attempts at a renewed resistance; but, harassed by the forces led by Fersen, Denissow, and Kleist, defeated in a battle, deprived of their artillery and all resources, they accepted an honourable capitulation; the greater part quitted a country which they could no longer defend; while some repaired to Warsaw, to await better days.

Degradation
of the King.

Such was the termination of this lamentable and disgraceful conflict. Austria having effected little in the field, and Prussia having retreated from Warsaw, baffled and defeated, Russia appeared to be sole arbitress of the fate of the conquered country. Stanislaus Augustus was allowed to remain in the capital; and the allies, while arranging the manner in which his kingdom should be parcelled out among them, behaved toward him with a sort of burlesque ceremony, communicating, in pompous terms, the result of discussions in which he was not allowed to participate, in the form of resolves which it was his duty to enforce.

1795.
Nov. 25.
His abdication.

At the end of ten months, at the mandate of the imperious Catherine, the feeble Stanislaus Augustus abdicated a throne he was so little qualified to fill, and passed the remainder of his days* in opulent insignificance, enjoying, to the last, a pension of two hundred thousand ducats (£93,700), allowed by his patroness and oppressor. Nearly another year elapsed before the partition was definitively adjusted, and then was concluded the treaty by which Poland was expunged from the map of Europe.

1796.
Oct. 21.
Final partition
of the
kingdom.

Austria had, for her share, the entire palatinates of Sandomir and Lublin, and the greater part of Cracow, together with those portions of the district of Chelm, and the palatinates of Bryeze, Podlaskia, and Mazovia, which extend along the left bank of the river Bug; about eight hundred and thirty square miles. Prussia took the portions of the palatinates of Mazovia and Podlaskia, situate on the right bank of the Bug; a part

* Two years; he died 11th February, 1797. It was suggested that one motive of his quiet resignation was, that the allied powers might be induced to discharge immense debts, which, during his reign, he had contracted. No such stipulation was made, and the allied powers did not make definitive arrangements for this act of justice till a few days before his death, 26th January, 1797.

of the palatinate of Troki and of Samogitia, on the left of the Niemen; in short, a district of the Lesser Poland, forming a part of the palatinate of Cracow, about one thousand square miles. Russia obtained all the portion of Lithuania which yet remained to Poland, as far as the Niemen, and the boundaries of Bryese and Novogrodek, and from thence to the Bug, with the greater part of Chelm on the right bank of that river, and the remainder of Volhinia, making, inclusive of Courland and Samigallia, which had already submitted to her, about two thousand square miles. The territorial inequalities of this definitive partition were compensated by local aptitudes, by culture, and by population*.

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1796.

* In relating these events, I have principally followed *Histoire de trois Démembrements*, tom. iii. liv. 13 and 14; Castéra, *Histoire de Catherine II.* tom. iii. p. 158 to 175; *Anonymous History*, p. 398, et seq.; *View of the Russian Empire*, by Mr. Tooke, vol. i. p. 281; and Ségur, *Histoire de Frédéric-Guillaume II.* tom. iii. c. 12. It may be observed, that all these writers are adverse to the proceedings of the allied sovereigns: if I could have found an apologist, I would have consulted and quoted him.

CHAPTER THE NINETY-FIFTH.

1795—1796.

Sea-fights—In the Mediterranean.—Capture of *Le Censeur* and the *Ca-ira*.—Loss of the *Illustrious*.—In the Channel. Capture of the *Minerva*—and the *Alcide*.—A British merchant fleet intercepted.—*Le Censeur* re-captured.—In the West Indies.—The French take *Sainte Lucie* and *St. Vincent's*.—The *Carribs*—their insurrection.—*Grenada*—*Dominica*—*Saint Domingo*—*Jamaica*.—Other naval actions.—The *Blanche* and *La Pique*.—A monument voted to Captain *Faulkner*.—*La Prevoyante* and *La Raison*.—The *Boyne* burnt.—Attack on *Sierra Leone*.—Gloomy aspect of Continental affairs.—State of England.—Scarcity—Riots.—Efforts of the press.—Irreligious publications.—Age of Reason.—Corresponding Society.—Address to the King.—Meeting at *Copenhagen House*.—The King attacked going to Parliament.—Opening of the Session.—Address moved in the House of Commons.—Mr. *Sheridan*.—Mr. *Fox* moves an amendment.—Mr. *Pitt*.—General *Tarleton*—Mr. *Jenkinson*.—Amendment rejected. Amendment moved by the Duke of *Bedford*—Proceedings on the insult offered to the King.—Observation of Lord *Lansdowne*.—Consequent proceedings.—Second proclamation—laid before the House of Lords.—Bill brought in—opposed.—Lord *Lauderdale*—Duke of *Bedford*—Earl of *Radnor*.—Second reading moved.—Duke of *Bedford*—Lord *Lauderdale*—Duke of *Norfolk*—The Earl of *Mansfield*—The Bishop of *Rochester*.—Lord *Lauderdale*.—Mr. *Pitt* moves to bring in a bill against seditious meetings.—

Mr. Fox.—Progress of the discussion.—Proceedings of the societies.—Whig Club.—Corresponding Society.—Meeting at Copenhagen House.—Public meetings.—Other proceedings.—Their effect.—Progress of the bills.—Violent declaration of Mr Fox.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Fox.—Other members. Further efforts.—Mr. Grant.—Mr. Dundas.—Substance of the Act.—Treason Bill.—Sedition Bill in the House of Lords.—Opposition.—The Marquis of Lansdowne.—Bill passed.—Whig Club.—General satisfaction.—Publication by Mr. Reeves.—Motion by Mr. Sturt.—Debate.—Committee.—Mr. Sheridan's motion.—Motion in the House of Lords.—Prosecution ordered.—Observations.—Event of the prosecution.—Proceedings respecting scarcity.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Lechmere.—Mr. Burke's pamphlet.—Agreement entered into.—Bill respecting bread.—For regulation of wages.—Distillery.—Bounties.—Private acts of benevolence.—Loan.—Messages from the King concerning peace. Address moved.—Amendment proposed by Mr. Sheridan. Debate.—House of Lords.—Marquis of Lansdowne.

AFTER the retreat of the Duke of York, England was no longer a warring power on the Continent; but some occurrences, both on sea and land, are to be recorded.

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XCV.

In the Mediterranean, Vice-Admiral Hotham, who commanded in chief, with thirteen sail of the line and frigates, having received information that the French fleet had put to sea, and concluding that Corsica would be their object of attack, dispatched orders to San Fiorenzo for the Berwick, of seventy-four guns, to join him; but had the mortification to learn that that vessel had already been captured by the enemy. Their fleet, commanded by Rear-Admiral Martin, consisting of fifteen sail of the line, abundantly superior in complement of men and weight of metal, was soon discerned. The Censeur, a seventy-four, was encountered by Captain Freemantle, in the Inconstant frigate, and Captain Nelson, in the Agamemnon, of sixty-four, and must speedily have surrendered, but, the main body of

1795.
March 8th.
Sea fights.

7th.

In the Medi-
terranean.

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1795.

14th.

Capture of *Le*
Censeur and
the *Ca-ira*.Loss of the
Illustrious.June 27.
Capture of the
Minerve.July 13,
and the
Alcide.A British
merchant fleet
intercepted.*Le Censeur*
recaptured.In the
Channel.
June

16.

the French squadron advancing to her aid, the British ships were obliged to rejoin their own fleet, while the *Censeur*, totally disabled, was taken in tow.

Two days afterwards, a little to the westward of Genoa, the disabled ship, and the *Ca-ira*, of eighty guns, which had her in tow, were taken, and a cannonade between the two fleets occasioned considerable slaughter, without any material benefit to either party. An unfortunate incident gave the enemy a revenge, although not a compensation for his loss: the *Illustrious*, of seventy-four guns, was stranded at Nice in a gale of wind, and went to pieces. A spirited action took place between the *Dido* and the *Lowestoffe*, and two French frigates, the *Minerve* of forty-two, and the *Artemise* of thirty-six guns; the *Minerve* was captured, but the *Artemise* escaped. In a partial conflict, after driving the enemy into Frejus Bay, Admiral Hotham captured the *Alcide* of seventy-four guns; but she took fire and blew up, half her crew being destroyed by the explosion.

These small advantages were more than compensated to the enemy. A fleet of merchant ships, the *Fortitude*, the *Bedford*, both seventy-fours, the *Lutine* frigate, and the *Censeur*, the late prize, very ill appointed, were met by six sail of the line, under Admiral Richery, off Cape St. Vincent. An engagement ensued, in which the *Censeur* was recaptured; and the *Fortitude* and the *Bedford* would probably have shared the same fate, but that the enemy were drawn from fighting to the more alluring task of plundering the merchant vessels, of which thirty-five fell into their hands; the remainder escaped*.

In the Channel, Admiral Cornwallis, commanding a small squadron of five sail of the line and two frigates, chased several French ships of war into Belleisle Roads, and took nine merchant vessels; but soon afterward he fell in with a fleet of thirteen sail of the line, fourteen frigates, two brigs, and a cutter, from which, although surrounded, he managed, with admirable

* *Gazettes*; *Rose's Naval History of the War*, p. 205.

skill, to effect a retreat, almost without loss. Shortly afterward, the main Channel fleet, under Lord Bridport, encountered and defeated that of the enemy, as already has been related*.

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1795.
June 22.

In the West Indies, the aspect of affairs was discouraging, although not absolutely desperate. The French had succeeded in spreading the flame of revolt and insurrection among the negroes, the Carribs, and the Maroons, and their precepts and their practices spread over the islands, where they prevailed, all the horrors of murder, plunder, and conflagration. Reinforced by detachments from Guadaloupe, they gained possession, without much effectual struggle, of Sainte Lucie; Saint Vincents fell an easy prey, more to the treachery of the Carribs than to the efforts of the enemy. The treaty of peace which gave this island to the crown of Great Britain, contained no reservation or condition in favour of these people; but the humane generosity of the British government placed them in a state of security and ease. They were permitted to hold their lands without the exaction of rent or labour; they were always duly paid for their services and the produce of their industry, so that their apparent interest concurred with their constant professions, in warranting expectations of sincere attachment. While the English force maintained a superiority, the Carribs were profuse in declarations of adherence, and even resentful of any expression that seemed to imply a doubt on the subject; but when the French, in an irresistible body, made a descent from Guadaloupe, they raised the standard of hostility, and, under a leader named Joseph Chatoyer, issued ferocious declarations and practised horrible cruelties. The British troops, the militia of the island, and the negroes who remained faithful, made a vigorous stand; Chatoyer was killed in battle, but the French were not yet expelled. The most memorable conflict which occurred terminated unfavourably to the British. Major Ecuyer, advancing toward Mount Young, being disappointed

West Indies.

The French
take
Ste. Lucie and
St. Vincents.

The Carribs.
April to
August.

Their insur-
rection.

March 12.

October.

* Chapter 93.

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1795.

in his expectation of support, and preparing to retreat, was surprised by six hundred of the enemy, his camp taken, and a great number of his followers put to the sword. After some other conflicts, the main body, under Major-General Irving and Brigadier-General Meyers, expelled the enemy from Vigie, and compelled them to seek safety in intrenchments at Mount Young and Mount William*.

Grenada.

February.

March 2.

3.

4.

In Grenada, french in its original colonization, retaining, among all its inhabitants, the ancient language, manners, and affections, the task of exciting insurrection presented no difficulties. Encouraged by the success of the republican arms in Guadeloupe, some of the most depraved people of colour repaired to Victor Hugues for advice and assistance, and returned to Charlotte Town, commonly called Gouyave, with all the apparatus of insurrection; arms, ammunition, red caps, national cockades, flags, inscribed "Liberty, equality, or death;" Commissions, signed by Hugues, Goyrand, and Le Bas, assigning to some the rank of officers, with promises of aid, and a declaration from the commissioners. The people rose; plunder, burning, and murder, were perpetrated, without respect to age, sex, or condition. A proclamation of the Governor-General Home, offering pardon to all who would surrender, and denouncing rigorous measures against those who should continue obstinate, produced a counter-proclamation. This paper was from Julien Fédon, a mulatto, whom the French had constituted a general, summoning the commander of the forces, and all others, to surrender within two hours, and declaring that all persons taken in arms, or who should not have joined the national flag, should be punished with death, their estates burnt, and their lands confiscated. This proclamation, and a declaration by the commissioners, abounded in the accustomed terms of republican coarseness; it spoke of the tyrant

* Account of the Black Carribs of St. Vincents, from the Papers of the late Sir William Young, 8vo. 1795; Letter of Major-General Irving, in the Gazette; Debrett's State Papers, vol. iii. p. 2; Appendix, p. 70; Chronological History of the West Indies, by Captain Thomas Southey, vol. iii. p. 98.

Home; and threatened the heads of the English, as vile satellites of George; and, among other menaces, Victor Hugues declared, that had he found Grey and Jervis, he would have hanged them, as he would Prince Edward. These specimens of disgusting vulgarity and atrocious savageness, were not mere verbal effusions of hatred or vain glory, but the produce of rancorous hearts, and followed by deadly acts. Governor Home, General Campbell, and forty-six other gentlemen, were all sacrificed in cold blood in one day; and wanton murders of defenceless prisoners were continually perpetrated. Finally, the English, although insufficiently reinforced, at the end of the year, had compelled the enemy to seek safety in the mountains*.

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1795.

April 8.

With his usual allies, the runaway negroes and the French inhabitants, Victor Hugues made also an attempt on Dominica, where a force was landed from Guadaloupe; but, although almost unsupported by regular troops, the loyal inhabitants repulsed the invaders and crushed the insurrection. Many of the rebels were subjected to legal punishment; many of the French planters were driven from the island; about six hundred were sent to England, and tranquillity was restored†.

Dominica.

June.

In Saint Domingo, the horrors of war were augmented by the destructive effect of an epidemic called the yellow fever; and Jamaica was kept in alarm by an insurrection of the Maroons: but both these islands will claim more particular notice in a future page.

St. Domingo.

Jamaica.

In many naval engagements the honour of the British flag was well sustained, not against a timid or irresolute, but a brave and determined foe; inferior only in skill, but never deficient in valour or resolution, and that as well in conflicts between single vessels as when fleet was opposed to fleet. Conspi-

Other naval actions.

* Narrative of the Insurrection in Grenada, by John Hay (who was one of the party of prisoners with Governor Home, but, with two others, set at liberty); Narrative of the Revolt and Insurrection of Grenada, by Gordon Turnbull; and the General Accounts in Southey, vol. iii. p. 96, et seqq.; and in the Annual Register, and General Histories and Collections.

† Rose, p. 227; Southey, vol. iii. p. 96.

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1795.

January 5.
The *Blanche*
and *La Pique*.A monument
voted to Capt.
Faulkner.La *Prévoyante*
and *La Raison*.
May.April 30.
The *Boyne*
burnt.1794.
September 28.
Attack on
Sierra Leone.

cuous among those of the first description is the action which took place in the West Indies between the *Blanche*, an English frigate of thirty-two guns, and the *Pique*, of thirty-eight. The English commander, Captain Faulkner, was killed by a musket ball, while lashing for the second time the bowsprit of the French, to the capstern of his own ship. Mr. Watkins, the first-lieutenant, succeeding to the command, bravely continued the engagement, blowing up his transom beam to facilitate his operations; and, at length, after a prodigious carnage, the French captain struck his colours and was carried into Martinique*. General Smith moved, in the House of Commons, and was seconded by Mr. Grey (April 14), that a monument should be erected in Westminster Abbey to the honor of Captain Faulkner: Mr. Windham resisted the proposition on the ground of precedent; but it was carried.

Having been apprized that five French ships, armed en flute, were preparing to quit Hampton Roads, in Virginia, Admiral Murray dispatched Captain Cochrane in the *Thetis*, and Captain Beresford in the *Hussar*, to intercept them. After a spirited though short contest, three of the French ships struck their colours; one afterward escaped, two others secured themselves by flight, while two, *La Prévoyante* and *La Raison*, remained in the hands of the conquerors; the French commodore fled in the action†. As an incidental disadvantage to our navy, incurred by mere misfortune, it may be mentioned, that the *Boyne*, of ninety-eight guns, recently returned from the West Indies, was accidentally destroyed by fire at Spithead.

An attack was made by a small French squadron on the settlement of Sierra Leone. The inhabitants, having no means of resistance, struck the British flag;

* The loss on board the *Blanche* was returned at eight killed and twenty-one wounded; while on board *La Pique*, one hundred and ten were found wounded and seventy-six dead; but many more had been thrown overboard or perished in the sea by the fall of the masts. For a minute and technical account of the action, see Rose, p. 228; Southey, vol. iii. p. 96.

† Rose, p. 231.

but the invaders continued for two hours to rake every street with grape shot and to plunder the houses which remained standing. They were preparing to involve the whole town in flames; but having, at the request of the free American negroes, agreed to spare their party, they limited their acts of destruction to the church, the colonists' warehouses, and the dwelling of every English inhabitant. To this settlement, formed for the purpose of preventing the trade in negroes, the French had promised that the ravages of war should not be extended, and it was rapidly advancing in prosperity. It soon recovered from the effects of this attack: in the course of a year the settlers were enabled to re-establish their affairs, and detach a party to form a new settlement, and to confirm the friendly intercourse they had previously maintained with the Foulahs*.

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XCV.

1794.

Turning from these distant and comparatively unimportant scenes, to those which vitally affected the state and interests of Great Britain, it will appear that, from the aspect of affairs on the Continent, none but the most gloomy apprehensions could arise. Selfishness and fear impelled many powers of Germany, following the example of Prussia, to separate themselves from their constitutional head; and the effect of a congress held at Rastadt was to leave to the Emperor the election only of seeking peace, on any terms, with the overwhelming republic, or prosecuting the war with such resources as his hereditary dominions and the pecuniary aid of England could afford. The late unprincipled transactions in Poland had sunk the dignity of thrones, and afforded topics for invective and comparison whenever the spoliations, subjugations, or usurpations of France were mentioned.

1795.

Gloomy aspect
of Continental
affairs.

England, secure within herself, and, notwithstanding occasional checks or disappointments, mistress of the ocean, had nothing to fear from external foes; but many circumstances concurred with the falseness or instability of her allies to occasion measures which would give force to the exertions of the disaffected.

State of Eng-
land.

* M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. pp. 310, 359.

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XCV.

1795.
Scarcity.

Riots.
April 18.

June 22.

Efforts of the
press.

Irreligious
publications.

Among the most prominent of these, was a scarcity of grain, occasioned by two successive bad harvests. The humbler classes severely felt the pressure; and the instigators of disaffection, raising the usual clamour against forestallers and monopolists, and attributing all evils to the continuance of the war, succeeded in driving the people to dangerous riots in various parts of the country. In Sussex, four hundred of the Oxford Militia, stationed at Bletchington Barracks, issued forth, with loaded arms, and, in Seaford and other places, plundered the butchers and bakers; and were not deterred from their dangerous proceedings until surrounded and taken prisoners by a party of regulars. At Birmingham, excited by inflammatory hand-bills, a mob of a thousand people arose, clamouring for "a large loaf, as they were starving," attacked and partly destroyed a mill and bake-house, resisted the military, and were not finally quelled until some blood had been shed. Similar commotions, although not so serious, took place at Nottingham, Coventry, and in various other parts. These events occurred before the harvest; and, as the weather in summer was most unpromising, it was anticipated, and so the event proved, that the crops, instead of affording means to allay, would furnish grounds for increasing the prevailing discontent*.

Every engine of the press, from a placard or newspaper paragraph to a pamphlet or volume, was employed to depress the spirit of those who loved their country, and exasperate the malevolence of her domestic enemies. As it was obvious that faith in any fixed system, and more especially the Christian religion as established by the law of England, must offer a powerful barrier against the immoral and sanguinary projects of the republican reformers, attempts were made to overthrow all belief in revelation, and to decry the Holy Scriptures as an incredible compound of falsehood and folly. Publications to that effect were not new. They had in former times been produced and

* Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. Chronicle, *passim*.

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XCV.

1795.

Age of Reason.

refuted: but an attack on that which is held sacred always seems new; for the exposure of it is either forgotten, or, when renewed, contemned as old and hackneyed. The attack, from its appearance of audacity and vigour, from the gratification it affords to low malice and profligate audacity by assailing the system held sacred and its ministers, always carries away a number of persons who are earnest in proportion to their corruption and wickedness; and who, in this country, make up for their want of reason and of importance by their loudness and indecency. Thomas Paine, who, in the days of Robespierre, had escaped almost by a miracle from the guillotine*, produced a farrago entitled "The Age of Reason, being an investigation of true and fabulous theology," to which a second part was afterward added. His want of learning he endeavoured to supply by copying from the works of the anti-religious writers of his adopted country; and he was not prevented by feeling or modesty from repeating assertions often detected as false, and aiding them, when necessary, by inventions of his own†. It is not necessary here to enter upon this subject, or to investigate the opinions of the writer. They were adopted by the lowest class of revolutionary leaders; and their author was with them as much as ever the subject of admiration and boastful eulogy.

* The anecdote of his escape, as detailed in a most intelligent periodical publication (Quarterly Review, vol. vii. p. 430), is sufficiently interesting to be recorded. "There were some gaolers, who, being as brutal as their superiors, used to summon all their prisoners, for the pleasure of beholding their suspense, when the cart, or, as it was too truly called, *la grande bierre roulante*, arrived to take any of them to the tribunal. In the prison where he was confined, the keeper had some humanity; and it was his custom, when he received the fatal list, to mark the door of the intended victim's apartments with chalk, unknown to them, and call them out when the cart came. The doors opened into a corridor; and, when opened, went back against the wall. Paine's door happened to be open when the keeper went round to make his mark, and he chalked it on the inside: it was shut when he came to take the prisoners out; and the destroying angel, says Paine, passed by. Before the mistake was discovered, the reign of blood was over." The account is also given by himself, in a letter quoted in Sherwin's Life of him, p. 162.

† Many persons wrote in refutation of these productions: two in particular may be mentioned—Mr. Gilbert Wakefield, and Dr. Watson, bishop of Landaff. The first, infinitely superior to his antagonist in learning and critical strength, shewed himself not at all his inferior in the powers of vituperation and abuse; the bishop, in a calm, tranquil, dignified manner, analyzed his principles, repelled his falsehoods, and exposed his ignorance and presumption.

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1795.

Corresponding
Society.

June 29.

If there were in the British dominions spirits who were to be rendered disloyal through despair, the aspect of public affairs presented them with motives: if there were any whom it was possible to exasperate into violence, no effort was withheld that could produce the effect. Encouraged, rather than repressed, by the result of recent prosecutions, the Corresponding Society and turbulent individuals laboured in forwarding disaffection and discord. Riots were raised in the metropolis, under the pretext of animosity against crimping houses; and a meeting was convened in an inclosed field, behind the long room in the Borough-road in Saint George's Fields, by advertisements of an inflammatory tendency, and composed of many thousand persons*. Not unmindful of the dangers attending such an assemblage, the volunteers of London, Westminster, and Southwark, placed themselves in convenient positions; and, probably, the knowledge of their presence restrained the violence of the leaders, or at least prevented the mischiefs which might have arisen from a sudden impulse. As a means of excitement, biscuits were distributed, embossed with the words, "Unanimity, firmness, and spirit;" and on the other side, "Freedom and plenty, or slavery and "want." A noisy declaimer and itinerant missionary of their body, named John Gale Jones, was placed in the chair, and opened the business with a characteristic harangue, claiming a reform, by annual parliaments and universal suffrage. An address to the nation was voted, in a strain strictly imitative of their French models, full of inflated sentences of complaint and defiance, and boastful professions of firmness, demanding universal suffrage and annual parliaments as the natural and undoubted rights of the people.

An address to the King was also voted, reminding

* At this day, the district called Saint George's Fields is covered with buildings, and present no area on which a mob like that of Lord George Gordon, or the one now in question, could assemble. But the time exists in human memory when the whole space, after passing Westminster and Blackfriars bridges, was an open country, with only prisons, hospitals, chapels, taverns with gardens, and a few houses erected in dispersed positions. In 1795, building had made some progress, but there was still ample space for a meeting of many thousands.

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1795.

Address to the
King.

him, in the usual manner, of the Revolution, and the principles which placed the House of Brunswick on the throne, and telling him that, if he had not an honest minister, who would speak the truth, the people should instruct their sovereign, and save him from destruction. The resolutions they passed were in correspondence with these sentiments; speaking of their natural and undoubted rights, universal suffrage and annual parliaments; stigmatising the war as unnatural, cruel, and unjust, the cause of the present high price of provisions; the only remedy for which, and all other calamities, would be immediately to acknowledge the brave French republic, and obtain a speedy and lasting peace. They voted thanks to Citizen Earl Stanhope and Citizen Sheridan, for shewing them that they had one honest man in each house; to Citizens Erskine and Gibbs, for their able and eloquent defence of the prisoners on the late trials, and to the two citizens attorneys, for their judicious management of their cause. A deputation of the executive committee of the society waited on Citizen Earl Stanhope, as they called him, to request that he would deliver their address to the King; but his lordship being absent from town, their eagerness to publish their effusions could not be restrained, and a committee of six carried the address to the Secretary of State's office, adding to the title of Address of the London Corresponding Society, convened at a general meeting, that it was approved also by some thousand other inhabitants of the metropolis who attended the meeting*.

July 15.

This disgusting display of ignorance, presumption, and bombast, would be beneath notice, had no further objects been contemplated, or had the transactions of the day been their ultimate aim; but subsequent events shewed that the principal movers had, by some means, acquired the power of inflaming and directing a great body of the people, and that they could originate and give action to dangerous commotions, although

* Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. pp. *32, *34, *35; vol. xxxviii. pp. *137, *139; History of two Acts for the safety, &c. p. 90 to 98.

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 1795.
 October 26.
 Meeting at
 Copenhagen
 House.

they might not have decided in their own minds the precise extent of their operations.

After abstaining three months from any public demonstration, the Corresponding Society held a new meeting, in some fields in the parish of Mary-le-bone, near a tavern with a tea-garden, called Copenhagen House. The concourse amounted, it was said, but probably with exaggeration, to one hundred and fifty thousand persons; a man named John Binns presided, and, upon the model already adopted, an address to the nation, a remonstrance to the King, and a string of resolutions, were voted, in terms equally inflated and affected, and in sentiments no less violent and vague than those of the former meeting. The address to the people maintained that the late address to the King had either been artfully and prematurely suppressed, or passed over with unfeeling contempt. If the former, ministers had proved themselves guilty of high treason against the liberties of the nation! If the latter, his Majesty should consider the sacred obligations he was bound to fulfil, and the duties he ought to discharge. That to the King was entitled, The humble and earnest Remonstrance of two hundred thousand, and upwards, faithful, though greatly aggrieved, subjects, associated and assembled with the Corresponding Society of London. In the concluding paragraph, it said, "Listen, then, sire! to the voice of a wearied and afflicted people, whose grievances are so various that they distract, so enormous that they terrify. Think of the abyss between supplication and despair! It is our right to advise as well as supplicate; and we declare it to be our opinion, that a reform in the representation of the people, the removal of your present ministers, and a speedy peace, are the only means by which this country can be saved, or the attachment of the people secured." The resolutions, besides the topics formerly insisted on, introduced the assertion that there had been a plentiful harvest, but that the people were deprived of its benefits by the combinations of monopolists, which could not

have effect but for the corrupt state of the representation*.

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By what art or means so many working people, complaining of distress and poverty, were induced to waste a whole day, in listening to these effusions, has never yet been ascertained; but an alarming and awful event soon displayed the ferocity which had been infused into their minds, and the barbarous excesses to which they were prepared to lend themselves.

On the third day after this meeting, his Majesty went to open the session of Parliament; the crowd was observed to exceed any that had before been collected; greater even than at the coronation. Pall Mall, the Parade in Saint James's Park, and Parliament Street, were completely choaked up with the throng. Several noblemen and cabinet ministers, who had been held up to public hatred, were treated, as they passed in their carriages, with hisses, hootings, and groans. All these signals of disgust and contempt were vehemently repeated when the King began his progress from Buckingham House. Their cries were, "Bread," "Peace," "No Pitt," "No war," "No famine;" and some cried, "Down with George." When his carriage was opposite the ordnance office, a pebble, marble, or bullet, proceeding, as some supposed, from an air-gun, struck the glass, through which a small hole was broken, different from that which would have been made by a missile discharged from the hand, but resembling that of a gun-shot. In his further progress toward the house, the same cries and displays of violence were continued, and stones were thrown, which did not reach the carriage so as to do any mischief.

29th.
The King
attacked in
going to
Parliament.

During the whole of this alarming and disgraceful scene, the King displayed that calm composure and dignified intrepidity, which can result only from innate bravery, and consciousness of unsullied integrity. When the window of the coach was perforated, he merely observed to the Earl of Westmorland, who,

* Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. p. 47; vol. xxxviii. p. 137, et seqq.; and History of the two Acts, p. 98, et seqq. Thelwall, Hodgson, and Gale Jones, figured as actors on the occasion, and received the thanks of the meeting.

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with Lord Onslow, accompanied him, "That's a shot;" and, without changing his position to avoid further danger, he reached the House of Lords, and, having only said to the Lord Chancellor, "My Lord, I have been shot at," proceeded, with undisturbed calmness, to the business of the day, delivering his speech from the throne with his accustomed firmness and propriety.

When the royal carriage was returning to the palace, the violence and discord increased rather than abated. Stones were thrown with more effect; the glass panels of the carriage were shattered, and a missile, either a stone or oyster shell, for both were thrown, passing through one of the windows, nearly struck the King. When he quitted the state coach at Saint James's Palace, and in his private carriage was proceeding to Buckingham House, he was almost without guards, and the ruffians who had most distinguished themselves in these disgraceful transactions, renewed their attacks with augmented fury and audacity; they beset the coach in such numbers, that, but for the timely rescue of some horse-guards dismissed from duty, who returned to the spot, the King's proceeding would have been effectually obstructed. As a last display of malignity, the wretches pursued the state carriage to the royal mews, broke every remaining piece of glass, and its complete demolition was only prevented by the intrepidity of the servants and a few soldiers. The military, during this agitating day, abstained, however provoked, from any hostile movement, and were so cautious, that, not even by accident, by the unruly motion of a horse, or the unintentional discharge of a fire-arm, was any mischief occasioned. In all this period, his calmness and presence of mind never forsook the sovereign; and he gave an interesting proof of confidence in the principles of his subjects at large, by attending, on the following night, at one of the theatres, where he received more than usual testimonials of loyalty and affection*.

* Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. Chronicle; History of the two Acts, and all the periodical works of the time.

In his speech from the throne, the King expressed great satisfaction that, notwithstanding many unfavourable events, the prospect resulting from the general situation of affairs had, in many important respects, materially improved during the year. The French had been prevented from achieving their threatened invasion of Italy, and the recent operations of the Austrians had checked their progress on the side of Germany. Their successes in other parts, and the effect of their separate treaties, were counterbalanced by the destruction of their commerce, the diminution of their maritime power, and the unparalleled embarrassment and distress of their internal situation. A general sense appeared to prevail in France, that peace and the establishment of a settled government could alone afford relief from the pressure of difficulties; should the distraction and anarchy which had produced the present crisis, terminate in any order of things compatible with the tranquillity of other countries, and affording a reasonable expectation of security and permanence, the appearance of a disposition to negotiate for a general peace, on just and equitable terms, would be met on his part with an earnest desire to give it full and speedy effect. His Majesty adverted also to the war in the West Indies, to that with the Dutch; the assistance rendered to our fleets by the Empress of Russia, the treaty concluded with her and with the Emperor, and a commercial treaty with America. He regretted the necessity of imposing new burthens on the people, and particularly directed the attention of Parliament to the high price of grain, and the small promise of relief afforded by the late harvest.

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1795.
Opening of
the session.

An address was moved in the House of Commons, by the Earl of Dalkeith, and seconded by the honourable Robert Stewart, afterwards so much more known as Lord Castlereagh. Their speeches were firm, but free from arrogance or presumption. The last campaign, it was confessed, had not been distinguished by brilliant successes; but our exertions had forced the enemy to employ unjustifiable means for the support

Address
moved in the
House of
Commons.

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of their unjustifiable system; a system which necessarily tended to exhaust itself and to weaken him by his very victories. Our resources were unimpaired: the people were not deprived of their comforts by the war; and the national debt was in a state of liquidation. The defection of some of our allies was to be regretted; but it was not without excuse. Hanover was a particular instance. Close to the frontier of the enemy on one side, and having a suspicious friend on the other, the existence of its government was endangered; and it was hoped that no serious argument would be raised by the opposite side of the House on the conduct of the Elector of Hanover. Such a theme might be a proper subject for a school-boy's exercise, or for a declamation at Copenhagen House, but was unworthy a real statesman. Our successes in the Mediterranean and our ascendancy in the East and West Indies were mentioned; and while the principle of the war was vindicated, confidence was expressed in the desire of government to restore peace.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Sheridan appeared, in opposing the address, to have depraved his mind and debased his powerful intellect to the level of the declaimers in the Corresponding Society, St. George's Fields, or Copenhagen House. He began by observing that the fifth word in the King's speech was "satisfaction;" and if to be "satisfied" with every thing was a mark of piety and Christian resignation, the present ministers were the most pious men in the world. He ridiculed the improvement of our situation with respect to Italy and the Rhine, and censured our war with Holland, although it might be thought by ministers to contribute to the improvement of our situation. The King of Prussia, after having cheated this nation, together with Spain, had now forsaken the confederacy, and increased the "satisfaction" of the minister. Our West India conquests were reduced from three islands to two; the scarcity with which we were once threatened was now acknowledged as famine; and he was astonished how such words could be inserted in the speech, and pronounced by his Majesty with a smile

of conscious triumph, at the very moment when he was carried through the midst of his starving, dejected, and even beset with his irritated, clamorous subjects. Jealousies were commonly entertained of the introduction of Hanoverian troops into this country; but he should have no objection to import the whole Hanoverian council, and instal them in the office of his Majesty's present ministers: they might advise him to adopt measures which no arguments or events could recommend to those who now regulated his councils. That virtuous lady, the Empress of Russia, had also sent her fleet to the north seas; but it was to eat English meat and to learn English discipline, not to afford a cordial co-operation in any professed object of the war. It had been said that general discontent would produce some change in the situation of the affairs of France. If a state of misery, famine, and discontent were the guides to a better order of things, the people of England were in the right road to its attainment.

He did not forget Mr. Jenkinson's proposal of a march to Paris, or to contrast it with the feeble and ineffectual efforts at Noirmoutier and Poitou, where British blood had not flowed, but British honour had bled at every pore. The minister of Charles the Second, when that weak monarch was the pensioner of France, was not more guilty of treason, than the minister who should expend the treasure of this country in replacing upon the throne of France the family of the Bourbons, the natural enemies of Britain. No association with the republic could be so destructive to our interests as one with them; for never were there worse neighbours on earth than the French during the monarchy.

Mr. Fox introduced an amendment, with a speech of great oratorical beauty and force of argument. He treated the declaration of satisfaction as an insult, which merited indignation and punishment. After having persisted three years in the prosecution of a war for miserable speculations, added to the capital of the debt one hundred millions, and subjected the people to five millions a-year in permanent taxes, ministers

Mr. Fox
moves an
amendment.

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insulted the country by putting into his Majesty's mouth the impudent falsehood that their condition was "materially improved." In answer to their assertion, he reviewed the military transactions, treated on the scarcity of grain, which had been anticipated by himself and many of his friends in the last session; but their observations were treated with disdain or imputed to a factious spirit. Remarking on the comparative state of Great Britain and France, he reiterated the observations on the French assignats and the paper currency of America, and gave a glowing description of the proud situation of France, after it had been said that she was reduced to a state of weakness, which, from her deplorable situation, would render her an easy prey.

He treated as most vague and unsatisfactory the assertion, that his Majesty would seize on the first favourable moment to treat for peace; and recapitulated the arguments he had used at various periods from 1792, contending that, at every moment from the commencement of the war, our ministers might have negotiated with the French on better terms than they could at this time; and that our relative situation had been progressively growing worse.

After many more observations on the West Indies and Quiberon, on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and the Rights of Man, he stated his amendment, which requested the King to review the events of the last three years, and the comparative circumstances of the belligerent powers; to reflect on the situation of the United States of America, and those nations of Europe which had maintained a dignified neutrality; on the conduct of Prussia and Spain and the princes of the empire, and to take decided and immediate measures for bringing about a peace with France, whatever might be the present or future form of her internal government, and look for indemnity where alone indemnity is to be found, in the restoration of industry, plenty, and tranquillity at home; declaring, that if the existing powers of France were to reject a pacific negotiation upon suitable terms, and to persevere in

hostilities, the House would strenuously support a vigorous prosecution of the war; confident that the spirit of the nation, when roused in such a cause, would still be able to accomplish what was just and necessary, however exhausted and weakened by the ill-concerted projects of those who had directed his councils.

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1795.

To these vehement philippics, an answer in all their details was not attempted. Mr. Pitt considered the amendment to contain a proposition so extraordinary, that he could hardly think the leader of opposition serious in making it. After describing the supposed state of universal degradation and disappointment to which we had been reduced in consequence of the war, we were advised, at this moment, to sue for peace. Without being informed how a negotiation was to be conducted, or what indemnity this country was to expect, it was a mere mockery to suppose we could return to a state of security and peace. Confining himself to the matter of the address, he submitted to the candid consideration of the House whether, notwithstanding our acknowledged reverses, he could justly be charged with insulting the nation by the use of the word "satisfaction." Allowing for all the victories gained by the enemy, and all the disasters sustained by this country and her allies, the house could not, on a fair comparison, fail to perceive that the French were reduced in their means of carrying on the war. From the depreciated state of the assignats, he believed that the enemy could not raise the resources for a new campaign, without restoring the system of terror. After some other remarks on their financial, colonial, and internal condition, and lamenting the fate of the unfortunate emigrants who fell fighting for their lawful King at Quiberon, he said he had no doubt that the situation of things was materially improved.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt had intimated that the armies employed against Spain, being disbanded and mixed among the people, would increase the dangers and difficulties of the country; but General Tarleton, with more accu-

General
Tarleton.

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rate military prescience, foretold that they would be employed in the invasion of Italy.

1795.

Mr. Jenkinson.

Mr. Jenkinson justified his former declaration respecting a direct march to Paris, by citing the authority of General Dumouriez, whose character, as a military man, gave weight to his opinion. The determination of France to retain Holland was an insuperable obstacle to an immediate peace. Possessing the whole coast from Bayonne to the Weser, she might in peace usurp our commerce, and in war distress us by her cruisers; and be enabled, by the increase of her navy, to oppose not only strength to strength, but strength to our weakness.

Amendment
rejected.

Mr. Pitt having made an able and eloquent reply, a majority of four to one concurred in rejecting the amendment*.

House of
Lords.
30th.Amendment
moved by the
Duke of
Bedford.

In the House of Lords, the amendment offered by Mr. Fox was moved by the Duke of Bedford, whose speech in support of it had no more novelty or originality than the motion itself. In the course of the debate, Lord Grenville observed, that if the new constitution of France should be found likely to secure a government likely to preserve the relations of peace and amity, his objections to treat would be entirely removed; the Duke of Bedford professed himself satisfied, and offered to withdraw his amendment: the ministerial peer, not denying his expression, objected to making the words of an individual in debate, not taken down at the time, a ground of either offering or renouncing any motion, as unparliamentary; but the Duke withdrew his amendment, and the address was agreed to.

29th.
Proceedings
on the insult
offered to the
King.

29th.

An address of the Lords on the King's speech was not, as usual, moved immediately on his departure; attention having first been called to the insult he had sustained. On a narrative of the transaction by Lord Grenville, the House resolved itself into a committee of privileges: witnesses were examined, who proved all the facts already stated; and an address to the

* 240 to 59.

King was voted, expressing concern that persons were found so insensible of the happiness derived from his just and mild government, and of the virtues which so eminently distinguished his character, as to be capable of such flagitious acts, and their earnest wishes, in which they were sure of being joined by all descriptions of his subjects, that prompt and effectual measures should be taken to discover the authors and abettors of crimes so atrocious.

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An address, so moderate in its terms and so loudly called for by the occasion, did not pass without animadversion from the Marquis of Lansdowne, who declared his belief that the whole transaction was only an alarm-bell to terrify the people into weak compliances; a scheme planned and executed by ministers themselves, for the purpose of continuing their power; a power which drew into their own hands the constitution, which he could not consider as safe in their possession.

Observations of
Lord Lans-
downe.

A conference with the House of Commons was required; but the intent of it not being at first stated, the Speaker, ever justly vigilant for the preservation of privileges and forms, objected to the omission: the mistake was rectified; managers were regularly appointed; the House, on their report and a perusal of the evidence which had been taken, concurred in the measure; and the King, in answer to the joint address, promised to give directions for the inquiries suggested, but said he had too much reason to be assured of the affectionate and steady attachment of his people at large, to have felt any other sentiment on this occasion than that of concern at so high a violation of the laws. A proclamation issued, requiring all magistrates and others to use their utmost endeavours for apprehending the authors, actors, and abettors in these outrages, and proffering a reward of one thousand pounds to any who would give information of the perpetrators of any act by which the royal person was endangered, but in vain*.

Conference.

Consequent
proceedings.

31st.

* To avoid returning to this portion of the subject, it may be stated that criminal proceedings were instituted only against one person, a journeyman

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1795.
November 4.

November 12.

Second procla-
mation.

Laid before the
House of
Lords.

Addresses of congratulation, replete with expressions of loyalty and affectionate attachment to his Majesty, were presented by the corporation, the merchants, bankers, and traders, and the light horse volunteers of the city of London. Similar sentiments prevailed in all parts of the kingdom, accompanied with a general expectation that some measures would be taken to repress the audacity and check the proceedings of the seditious: subsequently, an appropriate form of prayer and thanksgiving was offered up in all churches.

A second proclamation was speedily issued, referring to the recent assemblies in the fields, the harangues and proceedings calculated to create discontent and endanger the public peace: the seditious and treasonable papers which had been delivered, exciting the late tumults, and an anxiety generally existing, occasioned by rumours and apprehensions that seditious and unlawful assemblies were intended to be held, and such other criminal practices to be repeated; and the proclamation commanded all justices of peace, officers of corporations, and all others in authority, to exert themselves in apprehending persons delivering inflammatory discourses in such assemblies, and in bringing to justice those who had issued seditious and treasonable papers.

Copies of this paper were laid on the table of the house by Lord Mansfield; and Lord Grenville gave notice that on the next day but one, when the proclamations came to be discussed, he should offer a bill, founded on them, for better securing the safety of his Majesty's person and government, and obtained a summons of the House for that day.

printer, named Kyd Wake. He was tried before Lord Kenyon (20th Feb. 1796) merely for assembling, with many other disorderly persons, around the King's state carriage, shouting, hissing, hooting, and groaning and uttering seditious cries, such as "No war; down with him; down with George." The case was so clearly established by witnesses of undisputed character, that Mr. Erakine confessed himself unable to offer any defence; a verdict of guilty was pronounced; Wake was immediately taken into custody; and in the ensuing term (7th May) received judgment to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour, in the penitentiary house at Gloucester, for five years; to stand an hour in the pillory, and to find sureties for his good behaviour, for ten years, in one thousand pounds.

According to notice, the bill was presented. Its principal enactments were, that if any person, during the life of the King and until the end of the next session of Parliament after his decease, should, within or out of the realm, compass, devise, or intend death, destruction or bodily harm, or the wounding, imprisonment, or restraint of the King, his heirs, or successors, or to deprive or depose him from the imperial crown of this realm, or any other of his dominions, or to levy war against him, or to move or stir any foreigner or stranger to invade his dominions, and should express such compassings, devices, and designs, by any writing, preaching, or malicious and advised speaking, such person, being legally convicted, by the oaths of two credible witnesses, should suffer the penalties of high treason. That any person, who, by writing, preaching, or speaking, should incite or stir up the people to hatred or dislike of his Majesty's person or the established government and constitution of the realm, should be liable to the penalties of a high misdemeanor; and on a second conviction, to transportation for seven years. For these minor offences, persons were not to be prosecuted but by order under the sign manual, nor after the lapse of six months. The rights of both houses to unlimited freedom of discussion were preserved; and to those persons charged with high treason were retained the benefits conferred by the statutes of William and of Anne.

This bill, Lord Grenville observed, was perfectly conformable to ancient precedents; and was copied, with such variations only as existing circumstances rendered necessary, from a statute in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and one in that of Charles the Second, passed soon after the commencement of his reign.

It was received; and, on the motion for its being printed, Lord Lauderdale commenced an opposition which was never relinquished or intermitted during the progress of the measure. New crimes and new treasons, he observed, were introduced into the cri-

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1795.

6th.
Bill brought in.

Opposed.

Lord Lauderdale.

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minal code; and, by the new framing of words and phrases to describe those crimes, the bill held out a total alteration of the laws respecting treason, and a most dangerous innovation on the constitution. No connexion had been proved between the persons assembled in the fields near Islington and those who had been guilty of the flagitious acts committed on the person of their Sovereign. Was a proclamation a fit ground for an act of Parliament so directly attacking the privileges of Englishmen? From the moment this bill should pass, every liberty and privilege of the subject would be abolished. No public meeting could be held to petition for the repeal of any law considered as a grievance, or for any purpose, however legal, necessary, or useful. It was an introduction of a system of terror, which was to continue during the life of the King, and even a session afterward.

Duke of Bedford.

The Duke of Bedford declined for the present to discuss the merits of the measure, convinced that, while it was yet in their power, the people would meet and display a sense of this attack upon their liberties. After a few observations by the Earl of Radnor, who declared that, from once hearing the pending bill, he had taken no alarm, but did not pledge himself to support it, Lord Grenville moved the second reading, explaining again the motives for introducing it, the state of the existing law, and the application of the precedents.

Earl of Radnor.

Second reading moved.

Debate.

Duke of Bedford.

On this question, the lords who had already spoken renewed their opposition with augmented vehemence. The Duke of Bedford thought the dignity of the House required some proof of the proceedings of meetings which had rendered such a strong measure necessary. When ministers suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, they appointed a select committee, and reported to the House a mass of evidence; but now they seemed to disregard all idea of deliberation, inquiry, or evidence. In Queen Elizabeth's time, the laws which Lord Grenville had referred to were chiefly directed against bulls issued by the Pope; and the measures in Charles the

Second's reign were adopted when he was just restored, and when they might be absolutely necessary for his protection.

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1795.

Lord Lauderdale.

Lord Lauderdale maintained that the Corresponding Society had no more to do with the outrage than his Majesty's cabinet. The Cabinet, indeed, were ten times more involved; for by commencing and madly continuing the war, they had reduced the lower order to abject distress. Was it then matter of wonder if thirty or fifty infatuated individuals, in a mixed assembly of perhaps one hundred thousand, should break out and vent their indignation in any manner that the irritation of the moment suggested? When laws were either strained to a degree of oppression, or new ones made totally subversive of liberty, it must be expected that the people would resort to force. Times and circumstances might not only justify resistance, but make it a duty; and in certain instances, he should feel himself compelled to resist an act of Parliament founded in tyranny and oppression, if prudence did not restrain him.

In supporting the right of resistance, the Duke of Norfolk maintained that in every limited monarchy it must necessarily exist; although to define the point at which it should begin to be exercised, or even to discuss it without strong or urgent occasion, might be highly improper.

Duke of Norfolk.

The Earl of Mansfield said, it had ever been the practice in this country to regulate the laws of treason by circumstances, and to make enactments according to the exigencies of the case; and he cited the provisions adopted in the reign of William the Third and Queen Anne for the security of the Protestant succession. The present bill was in itself a wise and salutary measure, and did not need the defence derived from example; but he had heard with surprise the times of Charles the Second reprobated, when the Earl of Clarendon was minister, he whose attachment to the constitution and whose distinguished virtues had contributed essentially to its preservation, and whose whole conduct exhibited a model worthy the

Earl of Mansfield.

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imitation of every minister. To guard against such attempts as had recently been made, the statute of Edward the Third was insufficient, from its uncertainty, and the facility it afforded to evasions; the provisions in the statute of Elizabeth were copied into that of Queen Anne. A denial of her right was declared to be high treason; and, on this act, a person had been convicted and executed. After noticing the leaven of republicanism, and the sect of Fifth-monarchy-men, which remained in the reign of Charles the Second, his lordship adverted to the word "Constitution." The people of this country had been accustomed to hold their constitution in the utmost veneration, and to prize the blessings it produced; and he hoped this sentiment in general was not impaired in consequence of the comparisons arising out of recent events. All the ill temper and ill blood which pervaded the country arose from the seditious publications with which it was inundated. Their grossness, justly despised by men of sense, would not form the antidote to their pernicious influence. The murderers of Henry the Fourth confessed that they had been induced to perpetrate the crime by the doctrines they had imbibed.

On a division, the majority was nearly ten to one*.

The Bishop
of Rochester.

In the further debates, little occurred worthy of note. The Bishop of Rochester (Dr. Horsley) was severely reprehended for saying that he did not know what the mass of the people had to do with the laws but to obey them, with the reserve of their undoubted right to petition against any particular grievance. Lord Lauderdale declared, that if he had been in Turkey, and heard such a declaration from the mouth of a Mufti, he should have attributed it to his ignorance, the despotic government of his country, or the bias of his religious opinions; but to hear it from a British prelate, in a British House of Parliament, filled him with wonder and astonishment. Against these observations, the Bishop ably and amply vindicated himself; but the phrase was treasured up, and

Lord
Lauderdale.

* 79 to 8.

added one to the stock of words used to stigmatize individuals when they could not be confuted*.

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On the motion that the bill should pass, the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lauderdale made a strenuous resistance; hoping that the spirit of the people would show itself in every part of the kingdom; nothing else would save the state from ruin; but, on a division, an ample majority appeared in favour of the measure†; the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Derby, and the Earl of Lauderdale joining in a protest.

While this bill was proceeding, Mr. Pitt introduced another into the House of Commons. After descanting on the criminal outrages committed against a virtuous and beloved sovereign, he trusted that the House would feel the necessity of applying some correction to the laws in force against such crimes; means must be found to repress the spirit which gave birth to so daring an offence, and to prevent such consequences of sedition. The House should adopt means to prevent those seditious assemblies, which served as vehicles to faction and disloyalty, which fanned and kept alive the flame of disaffection, and filled the minds of the people with discontent. As a law for the protection of his Majesty's person already occupied the other house, his intention was not directed to alter or enforce the laws made for the King's safety, but to prevent those meetings, to which all the mischiefs were attributable. Having described the manner of forming and conducting these assemblages, their specious pretexts and real purpose, to create faction, excite disloyalty, and prepare the minds of those who attended for rebellion, he observed, that to correct the abuse of a sacred and invaluable privilege, and, at the same time, to preserve it inviolate, required caution. A clear and defined power in the magistrate to disperse and put an end to all such meetings, was necessary; he would not interfere with lawful meetings, held for

10th.
Mr. Pitt
moves to bring
in a bill
against sedi-
tious meetings.

* Lord Thurlow, who had been the first to censure the expression, afterwards (December 9) acknowledged that the explanation of the reverend prelate not only reflected the highest honour on his good sense and candour, but cured the declaration of all possible exception.

† 66 to 7.

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legal and constitutional purposes; but should propose, that, whatever might be the pretext of a public meeting, notice should be given to the magistrate, that he might attend for the preservation of the peace, watch the proceedings, and prevent any measure that might tend to attack, or bring into contempt, either the sovereign himself, or any branch of the established government; he should be empowered to apprehend persons whose conduct should seem calculated for those purposes, and any resistance to his authority should be deemed felony. If the proceedings were tumultuous, and leading to bad consequences, he should have power, as under the riot act, to disperse that assembly, and, after an order to disperse, any number of persons remaining should incur the penalty of felony. This was the outline; the detail he would reserve for future discussion.

To those public lecturers who made the dissemination of sedition the source of livelihood, it would be proper to apply regulations like those passed about fourteen years ago, in a statute called, from the learned gentleman who brought it in, Mansfield's Act, by which all houses, wherein meetings of an improper kind were held on Sundays, were to be treated as disorderly. To avoid evasion, the clause should apply to every house wherein people met, exceeding by a certain number the real domestic family. He then moved for leave to bring in a bill for the more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox lost not a moment in announcing his determined opposition to the measure. His speech was unusually fervid and energetic. He felt as much horror at the attempt which was made against his Majesty as any man who might move, second, or support the bill proposed; but having agreed so far with the minister, there he must take leave of him. He believed it would be difficult to shew the necessity for the bill which had been alluded to as under consideration in the other house; the constitution had existed for ages, sufficiently guarded by the law as it stood;

and, therefore, if not a single word had been said on the present detestable plan, he should have given his negative to the other proposition. If, as was alleged, a seditious meeting had been held in the neighbourhood of the metropolis; if speeches were made that had a tendency to strike at the very existence of Parliament, the speakers were amenable to the law. If seditious hand-bills were distributed; if any person had so conducted himself as to be the means of causing the people to form dangerous resolutions, he was amenable to the law, and, when proved guilty, was liable to adequate punishment. It was a flimsy pretext, that the outrage offered to his Majesty was the result of public meetings. The House of Commons ought never, even in cases of extreme necessity, to proceed in any measure that might trespass on the rights of the public, without decisive evidence; and on this there was no evidence of any kind. The minister had acknowledged the difficulty of preserving the right of petitioning, and preventing its abuse; but difficulty and delicacy did not embarrass him, for they might be settled in the detail, as if he expected to bring the public to submit to the most rigid despotism. In that detail, Mr. Fox said, he would never take a share; for he would never attend the detail of a measure which, in its essence, was so detestable. "I thought," he exclaimed, "I knew the rights of man; ay, and the rights of Englishmen." [Here was a loud cry of Hear! hear!] "What," said he; "that is a slip you suppose: the rights of man is a sentence without a meaning. Do you say that men have no natural rights? If so, Englishmen's rights can have no existence; this House can have no existence. Man has natural rights; and he who denies it, is ignorant of the basis of a free government, is ignorant of the best principle of our constitution." The people were not to meet to discuss the topics from which their grievances arose, to complain by petition, and remonstrate to either House of Parliament; or, if they pleased, to the King exclusively, unless notice were given to a magistrate, that

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he might become a witness of their proceedings; and if he should think that any thing said had a tendency to sedition, he might arrest him who uttered it, or dissolve the meeting. "Say at once," said Mr. Fox, "that a free constitution is no longer suitable to us; say at once, in a manly manner, that, upon an ample review of the state of the world, a free constitution is not fit for you; conduct yourselves at once as the senators of Denmark did; lay down your freedom, and acknowledge and accept of despotism; but do not mock the understandings and the feelings of mankind, by telling the world that you are free; by telling me that, if out of this house, for the purpose of expressing my sense of the public administration of this country, of the calamities which this war has occasioned, I state a grievance by petition, or make any declaration of my sentiments, in a manner that may appear to a magistrate to be seditious, I am to be subjected to penalties hitherto unknown to the laws of England. Can this be called a meeting of free people? Did ever a free people meet so? Did ever a free state exist so? Did any man ever hypothetically state the possibility of the existence of freedom under such restrictions? Good God Almighty! is it possible that the feelings of the people of this country should be thus insulted?" He hoped the bill would never be brought in: he was not friendly to any thing that would produce violence; but did hope that this bill would produce an alarm; that, while the power of assembling remained, the people would assemble; instead of surrendering the power they possessed, would come forward and state their abhorrence of the principle of this proceeding; those who would not, he pronounced to be traitors to their country. Revolutions were not occasioned by the freedom of popular opinion, or the facility of popular meetings; but, as in the times of Charles the First and recently in France, by the absolute prerogative of the King, the arbitrary power vested in ministers, and the lettres de cachet. No danger could arise from a popular discussion of griev-

ances ; for if the complaints were groundless, the more they were discussed, the less would be the effect in exciting discontent ; but if these political humours were precluded from having a vent, no alternative was left but unconstitutional submission or actual violence ; a tame acquiescence, incompatible with the spirit of freedom, or an open resistance subversive of the order of government.

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To recite the arguments which formed the residue of this and the matter of the other debates, until the time when the bill for suppressing treasonable practices was sent down from the Lords, would be only to repeat the same matter, with such varieties as the talents of different speakers, their disposition to argumentation, their facility in recurring to historical analogies, or adducing legal authorities, their propensity to sarcasm and personality, or their disposition to invective, could occasion. The want of proved connexion between the speeches and publications of the societies and the outrage on the King, the sufficiency of the existing law to repress tumults and restrain sedition, and the tyranny and slavery which must ensue from the adoption of the proposed measure, were urged in every possible form, and illustrated by every species of eloquence ; with how little effect in the house, will appear by the subjoined divisions*.

Progress of the
discussion.

Whether in anticipation or in pursuance of the intimations given in both houses, uncommon efforts were made to procure strong declarations of the people against the two bills. The Corresponding Society took the lead. In a circular letter to all the patriotic societies in Great Britain, they spoke in confident terms of the union produced by Lord Grenville's bill : it had prostrated all distinctions arising from differences of opinion on the necessary degree of reform ; all personalities ; all considerations, except the necessity of stopping its progress and baffling its effects. It had long

Proceedings
of the societies.

* November 10, on the question that leave be given to bring in the bill, 214 to 42 ; November 12, that it be read a first time, 135 to 22 ; that it be read a second time, 133 to 21 ; to fix a day for that reading, 129 to 23 ; and November 17, that the bill be now read a second time, 213 to 43.

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been taught by every political philosopher, that, in a free country, the governor was the creature of the people; but it had been the uniform practice of tyrants and their ministers to act as if they considered the people to be the creatures of government. They published, at the same time, an address to the nation, as a reply to what they called the calumnies propagated by persons in high authority; a composition in which they had to surmount considerable difficulties: they could not boast of loyalty or attachment to the Sovereign; but recapitulated, at great length, their principles or pretensions; and, in conclusion, most solemnly and publicly disclaimed and reprobated the attack said to have been made on the person of the "chief magistrate."

Whig Club.
11th.

Such effusions from such a body would be little worthy of notice; but they received adventitious dignity and fancied importance from the co-operation of the Whig Club. The day after the treason bill* had been brought into the lower house, an extraordinary meeting was held, at which the Duke of Bedford presided, and proposed a set of resolutions, in which he was supported by the Duke of Norfolk, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Erskine. The meeting is said to have been unusually strong; all the members of both houses belonging to the club were present, and their number amounted to fifty. The sum of their decrees was a declaration of horror and indignation at the daring attack on his Majesty; a readiness to give every aid to the discovery and punishment of the offenders, convinced that the existing laws would be found sufficient for the purpose; a lamentation that this nefarious act had been used as a pretext for the introduction of bills striking at the liberty of the press and the freedom of public discussion; destructive of the right of the subject to petition, and subversive of the genuine principles of the constitution; and that it was highly expedient that meetings of the people, in their respective districts, should be immediately called, to petition

* In popular speech, the two bills were called respectively the "Treason" and the "Sedition Bills," and by those names it will be convenient to distinguish them.

Parliament against measures which must tend to infringe their just rights.

Preparatory to a grand meeting of the Corresponding Society, in a field near Copenhagen House, the Citizens were cautioned against coming with arms, as it had been suggested that they would; should any of them be taken into custody, they were advised to submit: the act would be illegal; and, if they suffered patiently, they might trust to a virtuous jury, and would triumph; nothing could injure the cause of liberty so much as violence. Upon this invitation, a large assemblage was collected: the leaders stated it at four hundred thousand; but that is utterly impossible, as it would have comprised considerably more than half the adult male population of the metropolis. Tribunes were erected in different parts of the ground, resolutions were passed, and an address, petition, and remonstrance to the King, and petitions to the Lords and the Commons, were voted. The King was informed that former complaints of an overburthened people, whom the misconduct and arbitrary counsels of his ministers were rapidly driving to the verge of desperation, had been neglected or perhaps suppressed: that, instead of the alleviation of existing oppressions, they were threatened with the total extinction of their yet remaining liberties; and that these tremendous bills threatened to overthrow the constitutional throne of the House of Brunswick, and to establish the despotism of the exiled Stuarts; and he was requested to prevent the possibility, by preventing the necessity of internal commotions. To the House of Lords they affected a lofty and distant language. They had no connexion with them, further than as a component part of the legislature, and therefore rarely addressed them. To the House of Commons they were not much more conciliatory, reminding them of the necessity for their being reformed; and referring to the consideration of both Houses the revolution of 1688 and the examples of their ancestors. Their thanks were no longer offered to citizens, but to his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, the Right Honourable Charles

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Society.

12th.
Meeting at
Copenhagen
House.

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Public
Meetings.

November 16.

James Fox, with others who were named: they also gave thanks to the Whig Club for their spirited proceedings and resolutions.

In some of the assemblies convoked on this occasion, members of both houses repeated the declarations, remarks, and predictions which had produced so little effect when first uttered. On the same day, and from the same tavern* where the extraordinary sitting of the Whig Club had taken place, a resolution was entered into for calling a general meeting of the inhabitants of Westminster in Westminster Hall. As the courts of law and equity were in full sitting, the assembly was adjourned to Palace Yard, where Mr. Fox took the chair, supported by the Duke of Bedford, the Earls of Derby and Lauderdale, Lord Mountmorres, Lord Robert Spencer, General Tarleton, Mr. Grey, and Mr. Sheridan. An advertisement had been issued, calling on those who were favourable to the bills to appear; and Lord Hood, Lord Belgrave, Mr. Ryder, and some others attended; but they obtained no favour from the surrounding crowd. The predominant party produced an address to the King, congratulating him on his happy escape, and a petition to the House of Commons against the bills: the petition of his opponents was described by Mr. Fox as one for slavery; and at the conclusion of some extremely vehement speeches, Mr. Fox, with the Duke of Bedford, Mr. Sheridan, and some others, were hurried into a hackney coach, and drawn through the streets by the people to Mr. Fox's dwelling. The adverse petition was signed by many respectable persons, although in number they bore no comparison with the other party; and meetings were called in several parishes, where the ascendancy of the popular party was resolutely contested.

Other
proceedings.

In the city of London, the struggle was not less earnest. Meetings adverse and favourable to the bills were convened: the general corporation met in Common Hall, and other divisions of the citizens in wards

* The Crown and Anchor in the Strand.

and parishes; and particular denominations and professions also held their assemblages, made declarations and prepared petitions; and parishes and districts neighbouring to the metropolis adopted the same course. The Friends of the People, the Constitutional Society, and that for preserving liberty and property against republicans and levellers, more commonly called Mr. Reeves's Society, framed addresses and petitions to different ends; and, that nothing might be left unessayed, Major Cartwright, by the hands of Mr. Fox, presented from himself alone, under the name of a petition to the House of Commons, a voluminous political essay, shewing that it would be a disgrace to live under the proposed laws, if they could be permitted to sully the statute book; and he advised the House that the best and only permanent security which the people could have for their liberties, and which would fix the constitution in their hearts, was a reform in the representation.

Counties and corporations throughout England called meetings, and presented petitions and addresses; and the same course was pursued in Edinburgh*, Glasgow, Dundee, Perth, and other places in Scotland. As a last effort, when the bill had made considerable progress, the Corresponding Society held a meeting in

* At a meeting of the inhabitants of this city (28th Nov.), the Honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, moved some strong resolutions against the bills. He was immediately (Dec. 1) admonished by some of the most eminent members of the faculty, that as the sentiments and principles of the whole body would probably be judged of from his acts, since, by their free and voluntary choice, he was annually constituted the head of their profession, and he was requested to consider whether his late political conduct and appearances had been such as to merit their approbation and render him the most proper person that could be found in the faculty to represent them to the world; and he was informed that the Lord-Advocate had been proposed to fill his place. The election (Dec. 5) terminated greatly to his disadvantage; the numbers being, for the Lord-Advocate 123, against 38. The impression made by this proceeding on his friends cannot be better displayed than in a speech which Mr. Adam made in proposing his health at a dinner of the Whig Club. Of all the outrages, he said, which the independent spirit of Britons ever suffered, the insult offered to the Honourable Henry Erskine by the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh was the most glaring. The persecutions which were carried on through the mean subserviency of revenue officers, might be expected; but that a high and honourable body of learned men should be drawn into such a service, was an instance of the temper and condition of the times, which would astonish every Englishman that heard him. In describing the unparalleled attack on Mr. Henry Erskine, he made a true and beautiful eulogy on his fine talents and virtuous zeal for the constitution under which he was born free.

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the fields near the Jew's-harp Tavern, in Mary-le-bone. Their usual orators addressed them in their accustomed strain; and declared that the Treason Bill was a shameful extension of the law, and aggravation of the punishment for misdemeanor; and the Sedition Bill, a repeal of the Bill of Rights, and a direct violation of the articles agreed to by William and Mary when they were called to the throne. An address to the people was framed, complaining not of the contemplated laws alone, but of the national debt, the excise, the Septennial Act, the impressment of seamen, and other portions of the system; and prescribing, as the only remedy for all these evils, a radical reform in the House of Commons. An address was voted to the King, advising him to dismiss his ministers; and sundry resolutions, the result of the speeches, but no petition to Parliament.

Their effect.

Such is the outline of the proceedings obtained by so much effort, and by which the public were kept in no inconsiderable fermentation. The petitions to the House of Commons against the bills are said to have been ninety-four, and the number of signatures one hundred and thirty-one thousand two hundred and eighty-four; for them, sixty-five, with twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and twenty-two subscribers*.

Progress of the
bills.

These petitions, which continued to be presented from day to day, during the progress of the two bills, gave a little tone and variety to debates, which were protracted, as Mr. Whitbread avowed, merely to create delay, for the purpose of obtaining more petitions†. A general description of the proceedings will suffice; for those of one day differed little from those which had preceded, except in vehemence and personality.

That the attack on the person of the King was treasonable, no member ventured directly to deny; although Mr. Fox endeavoured to shew that, if the offender could be discovered, a jury might acquit him,

* This enumeration is taken from a compilation in one volume octavo, called the History of the two Acts, p. 816, from which also, beside the Annual Register, and other periodical works, the principal facts are derived.

† November 25. Parliamentary History, vol. xxxii. p. 391.

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by declaring that he did not intend to kill the King. The principal point contended for against the bills was that no proof was given of any connexion of the miscreant who assailed the King's person and the mob which countenanced and abetted him, with the body who, three days before, assembled in the fields, and their leaders. Mr. Sheridan even went so far as to assert that the printed papers issued on that day, suggesting the murder of the Sovereign, were the production of some spies or instigators employed by government itself. From a party professing an anxious desire of legal proof in a matter almost self-evident, an assertion so manifestly untrue, and of which no proof whatever was tendered, came with a peculiarly bad grace. Had it been the effect of these bills to punish, by privation of life, liberty, or property, strict evidence would justly have been required; but when their only intent was to prevent the recurrence of scenes and the repetition of acts which were deprecated by every one, the demand is absurdly overstrained.

Urged by the heat of party, some members professed general opinions which would hardly be credited, if imputed to them without the strongest demonstration of their truth. On a motion made by Mr. Pitt to appoint a day for going into a committee, Mr. Fox said, he hoped these bills might not be altered or amended, but pass in their present form; as the attack was to be made on the rights and liberties of the nation, he wished it to be open, broad, and intelligible to the people. He did not wish their poison to be sweetened to their palates, but that they should be prepared and cautioned against the dreadful draught. If ministers were determined, by means of the corrupt influence they possessed in the two houses, to pass the bills, and they should be put in force with all their rigorous provisions; if his opinion were asked by the people, as to their obedience, he should tell them, that it was no longer a question of moral obligation and duty, but of prudence. It would, indeed, be a case of extremity alone which could justify resistance; and

Violent
declaration of
Mr. Fox.

Nov. 23.

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Mr. Pitt.

the only question would be, whether that resistance was prudent.

Mr. Pitt improved the advantage afforded by this indiscretion. He treated it as a broad and unqualified declaration of his opponent, that if his arguments and his measures did not prevail, he would then have recourse to different means of opposition. He had openly recommended an appeal to the sword, which must either consign its authors to the vengeance of the violated law, or involve the country in anarchy and bloodshed. With all the horror he felt at such language, he rejoiced that it had been so unreserved and explicit. The principle of the bills, upon which such language was ventured, had met with the approbation of a large majority of the house, and he trusted that majority would show that they had not lost the spirit of their ancestors, which had been so frequently referred to; and, if driven by treason to the hard necessity of defending the constitution by force, that they would act with that energy which such a crime must necessarily excite in a loyal assembly.

Mr. Fox.

In explanation, Mr. Fox said, the case he had supposed was, that these bills might be passed by a corrupt majority, contrary to the opinion and sentiments of the great body of the nation. If the majority of the nation approved of them, he would not inflame their minds, and stir them up to rebellion; but if, in the general opinion of the country, these bills attacked the fundamental principles of our constitution, he then maintained, that the propriety of resistance, instead of remaining any longer a question of morality, would become merely a question of prudence. "I may be told," he added, "that these are strong words; but strong measures require strong words. I will not submit to arbitrary power, while there remains any alternative to vindicate my freedom."

Other
members.

Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Grey expressed their full accordance in the declaration of their great leader; while Mr. Windham observed that the obvious meaning of Mr. Fox's words, the danger of which was not

diminished by his explanation, was to advise the people, whenever they were strong enough, to resist the execution of the law. He rested on no majority, but that of force; and if the country did not see the dreadful precipice near which they stood, they were lost for ever. He would not wish for a dishonourable safety, gained by flight and pusillanimity, but by manly fortitude in meeting the danger. In that case, the right honourable gentleman would find that ministers were determined to exert a vigour beyond the law. Being interrupted at this point by cries of "Hear," and "take down his words," Mr. Windham finished his sentence by saying, that ministers "were ready to exert a vigour beyond the law, as exercised in ordinary times and under ordinary circumstances." This phrase, however explained, was retained by the vituperators of the right honourable speaker, and served to expose him to ridicule and dislike.

During the further progress of the bills, the debates produced some remarkable displays of talent from members to whose efforts the House had not been accustomed. Mr. William Grant, a gentleman honourably distinguished in Westminster Hall, but unknown in the House of Commons, supported government with great force of reasoning and brilliancy of eloquence; and, on the motion for a third reading of the sedition bill, Mr. Abbot*, in a masterly manner, explained and vindicated its principles, shewing their propriety, as well from the records of history as the state of the times; and he analyzed the efforts and arguments against it. On the petitions which, flowing in from all quarters, daily occupied the House, ministers, he said, as was their duty, had weighed the merits of those on each side; and the result was, that out of the eighty-two counties in Great Britain, eight only had petitioned at all; four of them, namely, Buckinghamshire, Suffolk, Rutlandshire, and Huntingdonshire, for, Middlesex and Northumberland against the bill; the other two, Surrey and Hampshire, had sent petitions

Further
efforts.

Mr. Grant.

* Afterwards Lord Colchester.

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and counter-petitions. Almost all the great cities and towns which had spoken out, were divided in opinion; such were London, Westminster, Southwark, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and both the Newcastles: the remainder of the contending lists was swelled with the names of places, however respectable, yet of inferior note; and such as, whichever way their number might preponderate, could not be conceived to express the general sense of the nation; and these, with a very few petitions from particular trades, composed the whole catalogue. After some remarks on the means by which these missives had been procured, the manner in which foreign objects, such as peace, had been introduced, and the presumption with which the petitioners affected to pronounce that the existing laws were sufficient for the purposes sought to be attained, he came to the short but momentous question, "Would the law, if passed, be obeyed?" With equal spirit and judgment, he dissected the observations of the three champions of opposition, declaring that it must ever live in memory, for the words sunk deep into the mind, that the right honourable gentleman, whose words were still unexplained (Mr. Fox), did openly declare, "that if these laws should be ratified by the royal sceptre, and the people of England should afterwards ask of him what they ought to do? he would tell them, It is no longer a question of duty; it is no longer a question of moral obligation: it is a question of mere prudence alone, whether you should obey or resist." He endured the painful task of repeating Mr. Fox's words, only to ground a representation to him, and conjure him to speak out again, in terms not ambiguous nor oracular, but plainly and distinctly, "Whether now, if these laws, amended as they were, should pass, he would repeat his signal to the inquiring people of England, and bid them unfurl the standard of rebellion?"

Mr. Fox deprecated this appeal, as an unparliamentary mode of requiring a member, who was not one of the government, to answer for his opinions, or pledge himself as to his future conduct. He complained that

he had been charged with stating a certain doctrine, to which he was still ready to adhere; omitting to accompany that doctrine with its application. He never said any thing on that topic which he was not prepared to defend: what he had asserted from principle, he would scorn to explain away from caution; and he would repeat, that neither Lords, nor Commons, nor King, no, nor the whole legislature together, were to be considered as possessing the power to enslave the people. This doctrine he had learned from his early youth; not only from Sydney and Locke, but from Sir George Savile and the late Earl of Chatham; and, lest some persons might imagine him too pusillanimous to maintain it without referring to authority, he would state at once, that, were there no authority, he would maintain it by himself. When he spoke of resistance, he did not speak of actual resistance, or the propriety of it at the present time; he only stated it as an argument, to show that it might be just; and it ought to be considered attentively by that House, when they were passing a bill, which, if all its provisions were enforced, after the declared sense of the majority of the people was against it, might provoke that resistance.

Mr. Dundas met these observations with blended strength and pleasantry; and, having disposed of the question of resistance, noticed some assertions in favour of the societies, advanced by Mr. Sheridan. He had declared that their views and object were altered; admitting that some very pernicious principles had been propagated, that there were some disaffected men among them, but that they were much less considerable in point of numbers than heretofore. He could not believe in their conversion, unless cogent proofs were produced. In 1792, Paine's book, on its first appearance, was adopted by the Corresponding and Constitutional Societies, and circulated by every means in their power. The principles contained in that book were an attack on the monarchy, an attack on the legislature, and a libel on the revolution. As a proof that their conversion was not sincere, he referred to

Mr. Dundas.

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their meeting three days before the opening of Parliament, when they expressed themselves in the most insolent and indecent manner, in an address to his Majesty. From all their conduct and publications, their design evidently was to subvert the constitution. If these societies had really given up their detested systems, the present acts would be so much waste paper, and would never be carried into execution. Until, however, he had strong grounds for believing in this change, he could not consent to lay down his arms. The third reading was carried*.

Substance
of the Act.

A succinct account of the enactments in this contested statute is, that no meeting, composed of more than a certain number of persons, should be holden, to consider of any petition or remonstrance, or to deliberate on any grievance in church or state, without previous notice by an advertisement, signed by resident householders. All meetings held in contravention of this law were declared to be illegal; and all persons attending them, who did not disperse in a given time, on the command of the proper authority, were to be subject to punishment. If at any meeting, legally called, illegal modes of altering the present laws were proposed; or, if such meeting, in the judgment of two or more justices of the peace, or of other specified civil authorities, should, by reason of any special circumstances, become dangerous to the public peace, then such justices, or other civil authorities, were authorized to declare the meeting an unlawful assembly, and to disperse it by force, if necessary; and were indemnified for the maiming or death of individuals who endeavoured to resist them.

By other clauses, a licence was made requisite for houses, rooms, or fields, where money was taken for admission to hear discourses or lectures; the licence was made revocable by the justices; unlicensed houses and rooms were subjected to the penalty inflicted on disorderly houses; and justices of the peace were empowered to demand admission into any room, house,

* 203 to 40. The various divisions which occurred in other stages are not specified: the strongest display made by the opposition was 70 against 267.

or field, in which they had reason to suspect that discourses or lectures were delivered contrary to the provisions of the Act*.

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On the Treason Bill, only one debate in the House of Commons is recorded. It comprised a considerable display of wit and reading, but little that was interesting in law or politics; the bill passed by a great majority; and a motion by Mr. Sheridan, to add a rider, preventing the Judges in Scotland from pronouncing sentence of transportation for sedition, exceeding seven years, by one nearly as great†.

1795.
Treason
Bill.

10th.

Lord Grenville, moving the second reading of the Sedition Bill in the House of Lords, gave a brief analysis of its contents and intended operation.

Sedition Bill
in the House
of Lords.

The Earls of Derby, Moira, and Lauderdale, and the Duke of Norfolk, reproduced many of the arguments which had been used in the other house, insisting on the sufficiency of the existing law to suppress sedition, and deprecating the invasion of the Bill of Rights. The Marquis of Lansdowne admitted that the Jacobin Society in France struck at all civil institutions; and when such a society had received the applause and affiliation of certain assemblies in this country, it was a debt of candour against prejudice to admit that ministers had a strong and rational ground of alarm for the safety of the state. These popular societies were undoubtedly an invention of a very formidable nature. Their mode of proceeding, by association and affiliation, was not a mere puff of wind to be passed by in silence; it was a serious matter to see that an obscure individual, by these means, could obtain a wide scope of power, and even possibly avail himself of the physical force of the great mass of the people. Some precaution was necessary; but the present bills greatly overshot the mark. The circumstances did not warrant such an inroad on the constitution.

9th.

Opposition.

The Marquis
of Lansdowne.

Lord Thurlow noticed the misconceptions that had

* Copied from the Annual Register, vol. xxxviii. p. 265.

† 226 to 45, and 184 to 27.

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1795.

occurred respecting the bill; and in no particular more than in the idea that it trenched upon that important principle of British liberty, established by the Bill of Rights, the right of the subject to discuss public grievances, to petition, complain, or remonstrate, or otherwise address the King, or either or both Houses of Parliament. On the contrary, the bill set out by recognizing that principle in the plainest and broadest manner. He thought little of the effect of speeches; if addressed, as was pretended, to thirty thousand people, not one thirtieth part could hear them: seditious papers might have greater effect; but the publishers of them were already within the reach of the law. He objected to the vague and indefinite language of some of the clauses, saying, that the authors of the bill, in the language of special pleaders, had failed to "hit the bird in the eye." Therefore, although the bill recognized the right of petition, and affected to guarantee that liberty, it was at best but a liberty in fetters. He wished that any essential abuses of liberty should be punished in their proper character, and not degraded to the description of felonies.

Bill passed.

The Earl of Westmoreland, Lord Boringdon, Lord Mulgrave, and the Lord Chancellor, anticipated or answered these objections by reference to the speeches, publications, and resolutions, made and enforced by the societies at their meetings in the fields; but no room was afforded for any statement or reasoning which had not already been offered. The motion was carried by a large majority*, as was that for a third reading†, and two protests were entered, one signed by eight peers, the other by three of them separately.

Whig Club.
19th.

When the bills had passed, the Whig Club held an extraordinary meeting, at which Mr. Erskine took the chair; and, after hearing speeches from him, from Mr. Fox, and the Duke of Bedford, it was unanimously resolved, that an association should be entered into for procuring, by all legal and peaceable means, the repeal of the two statutes. At a subsequent meeting, they

* 109 to 21.

† 107 to 18.

issued a declaration, referring to and enforcing their previous resolution*; but the tyranny, the slavery, and all the other evils which had been predicted, as they were never felt, soon ceased to be feared; and the public of the metropolis enjoyed quite as much repose and security, as when the fields and highways were blackened with time-wasting multitudes, hastening to bestow their attention on itinerant politicians, to follow their fancies and to imbibe their principles. In fact, the public had never interested themselves in the cause. If one hundred and thirty-one thousand persons really signed the petitions sent to Parliament; if they were all adults and all males, they form so small a portion of the whole population of the country, that their enforced or solicited endeavours can hardly be mentioned as opposed to the immense number who, by their quiescence, shewed their confidence in the justice and harmlessness of the measure†.

During the late discussions, Mr. Reeves had published a pamphlet, intitled "Thoughts on the English Government," which, in the course of a long dissertation, contained the following passage:—"With the exception of the advice and consent of the two Houses of Parliament, and the interposition of juries, the government, and the administration of it in all its parts, may be said to rest wholly and solely on the King, and those appointed by him. Those two adjuncts, of Parliament and juries, are subsidiary and occasional: but the King's power is a substantive one, always visible and active. By his officers, and in his name, every thing is transacted that relates to the peace of the realm and the protection of the subject. The subject feels this, and acknowledges with thankfulness a superintending sovereignty, which alone is congenial to the sentiments and temper of Englishmen. In fine, the government of England is a monarchy; the monarch is the ancient stock from which have sprung those goodly branches of the legis-

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1796.

Jan. 23.
General
satisfaction.

Publication by
Mr Reeves.
1795.
Oct. 26.

* History of the two Acts, p. 780.

† For a general account of the transactions respecting these two bills, beside the History already referred to, see Political Papers, by the Rev. C. Wyvill, vol. v.; Preliminary Papers, p. xxiv. to xxvii, and p. 303 to 328.

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1795.

“ lature, the Lords and Commons, that at the same
 “ time give ornament to the tree, and afford shelter to
 “ those who seek protection under it. But these are
 “ still only branches, and derive their origin and their
 “ nutriment from their common parent; they may be
 “ lopped off, and the tree is a tree still; shorn, indeed,
 “ of its honours, but not, like them, cast into the fire.
 “ The kingly government may go on in all its func-
 “ tions without Lords or Commons: it has heretofore
 “ done so for years together; and in our times it does
 “ so during every recess of Parliament; but without
 “ the King, his Parliament is no more. The King,
 “ therefore, alone it is who necessarily subsists without
 “ change or diminution; and from him alone we un-
 “ ceasingly derive the protection of law and govern-
 “ ment.”

Whether the opinions thus expressed are histori-
 cally or politically true or false, they were the legiti-
 mate objects of literary criticism alone. They offered
 in themselves no motive for public excitement, no fuel
 to the flame of any existing discontent: they formed
 part of a treatise in eighty octavo pages; sufficiently
 sober in all its parts to be repulsive to those who read
 merely for the purpose of increasing popular clamour;
 nor did its price, two shillings, place it within the reach
 of those who, by extensive diffusion, give effect to sedi-
 tion or scurrility. It was used, however, to afford
 vent to some of the ill-will entertained against the
 author.

Nov. 23.
Motion by
Mr. Sturt.

Mr. Sturt, having presented a petition from the
 Corresponding Society, signed by more than twelve
 thousand persons, submitted to the notice of the
 House this selected paragraph, not forgetting to in-
 form them that the author was the framer and pre-
 sident of the association against republicans and level-
 lers; and moved for a prosecution by the Attorney-
 General.

Debates.

As this was a question of privilege, Mr. Pitt moved
 in vain for the orders of the day, alleging that matters
 more important demanded attention. To impede the
 progress of those more important matters was the chief

motive for introducing the question ; and, for many days, debates and motions were renewed. In the course of them, no opportunity was omitted of decrying the pamphlet and vituperating the author. Mr. Jekyll hoped there was still enough of honour and independence in a British jury, and virtue sufficient in English judges, to bring the author to condign punishment. Mr. Erskine declared that if this was not a libel, he did not know what was : he deemed it a dangerous and malicious libel ; and any man who would maintain the contrary must be ignorant of the law. If the Attorney-General went into court and demanded a verdict, the jury would pronounce the defendant guilty, without desiring time to deliberate. Mr. Fox said that a more atrocious libel had never appeared, from the pen of a ministerial hireling, against the House of Commons. It was of a more dangerous nature and a worse tendency than any that had been issued by the Constitutional and Corresponding Societies.

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Mr. Sheridan entered into a logical and critical review of the whole pamphlet, deducing from it, as the opinions of the author, eight propositions, tending to exalt the power and prerogative of the crown ; to debase the importance of Parliament ; to decry the revolution in 1688 ; to shew that the dissenters were enemies to the country, and the Whigs impostors ; and that the verdict of a jury was not a final decision, and was intitled to little or no weight. It was the foulest, the falsest, the dullest, and the most malicious libel that had ever come under the cognizance of the House.

A committee was appointed to ascertain the author. After several days, Mr. Sheridan brought up a report, shewing, what might have been proved in an hour, that the pamphlet proceeded from Mr. Reeves. He suggested that, beside a prosecution by the Attorney-General, there should be an address to his Majesty to remove Mr. Reeves from all places of trust ; and that, instead of being committed to Newgate, he should be summoned to the bar, to receive a reprimand from

Committee.

Motion of
Mr. Sheridan.

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the Speaker, and to make a disavowal of his sentiments; and concluded by moving that one of the books should be burnt by the common hangman in Palace Yard, another before the Royal Exchange.

December 2.

Prosecution
ordered.

These propositions, tending to cast so much ignominy on a man who was destined to a trial, but not yet convicted, proceeded most strangely from the professed friends of liberty: they were easily repelled, and a prosecution alone was voted. The Earl of Albemarle moved some resolutions in the House of Lords; but, on the representation that the matter was under investigation in the other house, an adjournment was carried*. Lord Hawkesbury took the opportunity of describing, in warm terms, the character and talents of Mr. Reeves, and his great usefulness as law clerk in the department over which his lordship presided. Beside the prosecution ordered by the House of Commons, none of the other propositions were adopted.

By this proceeding, the opposition party neither increased their popularity, nor advanced their character: their motives were too obvious to demand respect or conciliate esteem. It was avowed, both by Mr. Grey and Mr. Fox, that an individual was selected for attack because his exertions in a public cause were distasteful to them†; and therefore he was vilified and persecuted. Even supposing his opinions to be untenable and his expressions unguarded, no statesman could have apprehended evil from them, nor could it have been calculated that faction, in its utmost malignity, would have put such an essay on a footing with the exasperating and insulting specimens of disloyalty published by the societies. To delay the bills was their first and great object; and perhaps their irritability was in no slight degree increased by the manner in which the Whigs, in their connexion with the democrats, were described and censured‡.

To terminate the narrative at once, a criminal information was filed and speedily brought to trial at

* 31 to 2.

† Parliamentary History, vol. xxxii. pp. 615, 616.

‡ See, for example, the pamphlet, p. 72.

Guildhall, before Lord Kenyon and a special jury. The Attorney and Solicitor General, with Mr. Law and Mr. Abbot, appeared for the prosecution, which was opened with a learned, luminous, and manly speech. Witnesses were rendered unnecessary, by a gratuitous admission, on the part of the accused, that he was the author. Mr. Plumer, in defending him, shewed that a libellous intent could not justly be charged; that, far from libelling the revolution, he had mentioned it with respect and veneration; and he shewed, by an accurate examination of all the parts of the pamphlet, that the imputation of an intent to supersede, or even to vilify or degrade, either House of Parliament could not justly be imputed. The Lord Chief Justice summed up the case with great candour and impartiality; leaving it to the jury to decide with what intention the work was composed; and advised them to see, with every fair leaning to the side of lenity and compassion, whether the party was guilty or not. In explaining the phrase, a fair leaning, his lordship said it was not to be such a leaning as would do away the effect of the criminal law; for it was as essential to the well-being of the country that the criminal as that the civil law should be put in force. They were not to exercise that blind mercy which would obliterate the offence, if proved. Far from verifying Mr. Erskine's prediction, that they would find the defendant guilty without leaving their box, it was not until they had consumed an hour in deliberation, that the jury declared the pamphlet a very improper publication; but, being of opinion that the defendant's motives were not such as the information imputed, they found him not guilty*.

Scarcity, that dreadful visitation, the effect of which can only be mitigated by patience and pru-

Proceedings
respecting
scarcity.

* The trial at large is in Howell's Collection, vol. xxvi. p. 529. The Rev. Mr. Beloe has said, that the criticism with which the verdict is introduced was owing to the obstinacy of one juryman, who, actuated by party feelings or personal dislike, would not agree with the other eleven in a mere verdict of not guilty. His opinions and feelings were known and disclosed to the defendant; but, from negligence or overweening confidence, he neglected to strike out his name in reducing the list.—Beloe's Sexagenerism, vol. ii. p. 120. The statement is also quoted by Mr. Howell.

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1795.

November 3.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Lechmere.

dence, had been used as the means of irritating and inflaming the suffering people ; and it engaged the attention of the superior classes and of the legislature. A committee of the privy council had entered profoundly into the consideration, and framed an elaborate report* : it formed a topic in the speech from the throne ; and, at an early period of the session, the House of Commons formed itself into a committee to consider the subject. In the preceding session, the King had been empowered† to prohibit the exportation and sanction the importation, duty free, of certain species of grain, and of cattle, vegetables, and many other articles of food and nutriment, until six weeks after the commencement of the next session. Mr. Pitt, in the first place, obtained the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the causes of the high price of corn. He proposed to amend the law relative to the assize of bread, which was governed by decisions of the Lord Mayor of London, founded on depositions, periodically taken before him, of the price of wheat in the market ; and he pointed out as matter for consideration the making of bread, not always, as hitherto, from wheat of the first quality, but from a mixture of inferior grain, Indian corn, and other wholesome and nutritious substitutes. He suggested the propriety of prohibiting the use of wheat flour in the manufacture of starch, and of a bill for preventing obstructions in the transit of grain.

Many observations were made on the suggestions of the minister ; but in no part of the discussion was the vexatious spirit of opposition displayed. Mr. Lechmere ascribed much of the evils sustained by the poor to the monopoly, as he called it, of farms, the manœuvres of corn jobbers, and the method pursued of selling large bulks by small samples ; and he suggested the establishment of granaries all over the kingdom, where the poor man might buy his bushel at a regulated price, and he could grind it with a hand mill.

* Annual Register vol. xxxvii. p *93.

† By statute 35 George III. c. 4.

Mr. Fox deemed most of the provisions stated by the minister, not only good, but perhaps better than any others that could be offered. He agreed with him on the assize; but expressed some doubts on the possibility of producing a mixed bread, which should be both wholesome and palatable. On continuing the prohibition on the distilleries, he observed that it would lessen the revenue; but whatever was so lost, was well gained to the country in the industry and morals of its inhabitants. Narrow-sighted, indeed, and pernicious would be the policy which sought to draw revenue from their dissipation and intemperance, the relaxation of their habits and the debasement of their character. He made observations on the payment for labour, and its disproportion to the enhanced price of the necessaries of life, which did equal honour to his judgment and to his liberality. He regretted that an enormous and dreadful majority of the people of England could no longer boast that they lived by the produce of their industry, but, during the pressure of every inclement season, were obliged to depend for subsistence on supplies afforded by the charity of the rich; but he deprecated all compulsory measures, confessing his fear that it would be found impossible either to raise the price of labour to the rate of provisions, or to lower the rate of provisions so as to meet the price of labour.

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XCV.

1795.
Mr. Fox.

Although no longer entitled to deliver his opinions in Parliament, Mr. Burke gave the benefits of his knowledge and eloquence to this subject in a Letter to Mr. Pitt, which was also published as a pamphlet*. Its chief aim was to counteract the false sentimentality of the political cant about the labouring poor; to shew the absurdity of a project to plunder the rich for their benefit; and the folly of any attempt to create a fluctuating scale of wages dependent on the price of food in the market: but, far from wishing to diminish the real comforts or the rational enjoyments of the poor, he objected to the stopping of the distilleries, as tend-

November.
Mr. Burke's
pamphlet.

* Intitled Thoughts and Details concerning Scarcity. Works, vol. vii. p. 373.

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1795.

Agreement
entered into.

December 11.

16th.
Bill respecting
bread.9.
For regulation
of wages.

Distillery.

1796.
February 12.
Bounties.Private acts of
benevolence.

Loan.

ing to deprive the lower sort of an enjoyment which was not to be judged of by its frequent abuse, but by the practical advantages which resulted from it to their health; and contended that the saving of grain was a futile pretence; that employed in distilleries being of the inferior sorts, or of damaged wheat, while the refuse contributed amply to the sustenance of man, by being used in fattening hogs.

A report from the committee was presented by the Lord Mayor; and the result was, that members entered into an agreement, the principle of which, under their recommendation, was widely, almost generally, adopted, to reduce the consumption of wheat in their families by at least one third, and by prudential regulations against unmixed bread, and the use of wheaten flour in pastry and other articles.

A bill introduced to enable bakers to make mixed bread, in conformity with the agreement entered into, encountered a lengthened dissertation from Mr. Francis, but passed. Mr. Whitbread brought in a bill for regulating the wages of labour in husbandry. Aided by the eloquence of Mr. Fox, it lived to have a second reading moved; but then met a civil death by a postponement of the question for three months. The act for preventing the use of wheat and some other articles in distillery was extended for another year; and bounties were granted on the importation of that and other species of grain into certain specified ports*. In aid of these legislative efforts, much good was accomplished by the benevolence as well as the self-denial of individuals. The East India Company imported from their settlements a large quantity of rice, which they disposed of greatly under its cost; and the city of London gave bounties to fishermen who would sell, in Billingsgate market, cod and haddock at two pence a pound†.

A loan of eighteen millions was found necessary

* Many of these measures had been pointed out in a pamphlet by Lord Auckland, intitled "Some Remarks on the Apparent Circumstances of the War," p. 53.

† Macpherson's Annals, vol. iv. pp. 362, 366.

for the service of the year. The terms on which it was obtained, and the taxes required to pay the interest, were the subject of many debates, which it will be necessary to notice hereafter.

By a message to Parliament, the King declared that the crisis which was depending at the commencement of the present session, had led to an order of things in France which would induce him, conformably with his sentiments already declared, to meet any disposition to negotiation, on the part of the enemy, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect; and to conclude a treaty for general peace, whenever it could be effected on just and suitable terms for himself and his allies.

Mr. Pitt moved an address of thanks, in a short and general speech, merely recapitulating the substance of the message. Mr. Sheridan expressed astonishment at this conciseness; an example which he did not copy, in proposing, as an amendment, to declare the deep regret of the House that his Majesty had ever been advised to consider the internal order of things in France such as should not have induced him, at any time, to meet a disposition to negotiate on the part of the enemy. If the present order of things were admitted as the motive and inducement to commence a negotiation, a change might be considered as a ground for discontinuing one when begun, or even for abandoning a treaty concluded, and imploring that such a notion might be altogether disclaimed, and an immediate negotiation commenced. Mr. Wilberforce was the first to resist this motion, which was supported by Mr. Grey and Mr. Fox. The debate was distinguished by the triumphant and taunting style of the opposition, and by reference to opinions and motions they had so often made without success. The present government of France, they said, was worse than that with which we went to war. We engaged with the Brissotines; the present men were the successors of that party; more moderate, indeed, but acting on the same principles. Ministers had protested against treating with men whose hands were

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1795.

December 8.
Message from
the King con-
cerning peace

Address
moved.

Amendment
proposed by
Mr. Sheridan.

Debate.

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XCV.

1795.

reeking with the blood of their Sovereign; and yet they now declared themselves ready to treat with the new directory of France, four members of which had actually participated in his sentence and death. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas answered these arguments and suggestions; and the amendment was negatived without a division.

10th.
House of
Lords.Marquis of
Lansdowne.

In the House of Lords, no amendment was moved: a debate on the address took place, which is chiefly remarkable from the perseverance of the Marquis of Lansdowne in asserting that we had been the aggressors in the war, and the firmness with which he was contradicted by Lord Grenville. The Marquis also advanced a proposition, that whenever the French crossed the Rhine, on the one hand, or the Austrians on the other, not much good could be expected to arise from the future operations of the invading party: for as an army got remote from home, it became timid in the same proportion as it was irresistible and energetic in its own country. And hence it was that the bounty of Providence seemed to have marked out the boundaries of every nation, to protect it from the ambition of man. Events speedily followed which shewed how liable to mistakes men of the best information and judgment shew themselves, when they venture to make general prophecies.

24th.

These were the principal matters which engaged the attention of Parliament until they adjourned for the Christmas recess.

CHAPTER THE NINETY-SIXTH.

1795—1796.

Treaties laid before Parliament.—Russian fleet.—Treaties with Russia and America.—A squadron equipped for the West Indies.—Its disasters.—Insurrection of the Maroons in Jamaica.—Causes of dispute.—Hostilities commenced. Treatment of the Maroons.—Application for Blood-hounds to Cuba.—State of the public mind.—Mr. Grey's motion for peace.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Grey moves for a Committee on the state of the nation.—Answered—rejected.—His motion on the misapplication of public money.—Mr. Pitt. Mr. Fox.—Negotiation attempted.—Mr. Wickham's proposal.—Answer.—Observations.—Proposals of Baron De-gelmain.—Mr. Fox's motion for an address.—Mr. Pitt.—Motion in the House of Lords.—Finance.—Loan.—Mr. W. Smith's motion.—Committee appointed.—Report.—Resolutions moved.—Amendment proposed—adopted.—Tax on legacies.—The tax on landed property opposed by Mr. Fox.—Mr. Grey.—Debate.—Bill lost.—Duty on personal property—passed.—Lord Lauderdale's bill—rejected.—Protest.—Tax on dogs proposed.—Motion by Lord Lauderdale on the four-and-a-half per cent. duties.—General Smith on barracks.—Mr. Windham.—Mr. Fox. Motion by the Marquis of Lansdowne.—Lord Grenville. Lord Auckland.—Lord Lauderdale.—Slave-trade.—Bill for abolishing—lost.—Mr. Francis's motion.—General Macleod on the use of blood-hounds—supported—answer.—Quaker's Relief Bill. Motion to increase the punishment of burglary and highway robbery.—Judicious observations of Serjeant Adair.—Expulsion of a Member.—Close of the

Session.—Mr. Burke's pension — attacks on the grant.—
Observations of the Duke of Bedford—and Lord Lauderdale.—Answer of Lord Grenville.—Mr. Burke's pamphlet
—answers.—Notice in the House of Lords.

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XCVI.

1795.
Treaties laid
before
Parliament.

Russian fleet.

Treaties with
Russia and
America.

Squadron
equipped for
the West
Indies.

Nov. 16.
Its disasters.

TREATIES which had been some time concluded with the Emperor, Russia, and America, had been presented to Parliament; but as they had long been in operation, no particular discussion arose. In consequence of our connexion with Russia, a fleet of that power was received into our ports, and the sailors trained in naval discipline; a measure which, although not noticed in the senate, did not escape animadversion; Charles the Twelfth, it was observed, had taught the Muscovites how to beat him on land, by persevering in wars; we might produce the same effect at sea, by cherishing and instructing a power, whose ambition was certain, but whose friendship was precarious. The treaties with the Emperor contained the usual stipulations of alliance, friendship, mutual support and guarantee of territories; and that with the United States related principally to questions of boundary, restitution of captured vessels, and indemnification for their detention; it was not calculated to influence the course of public events; but negotiations and discussions were in progress, sufficient to cause great uneasiness in the British government.

The disasters which had occurred in the West Indies were not mitigated; on the contrary, that dreadful scourge, the yellow fever, by its extended ravages, occasioned a frightful daily sacrifice of valuable lives. To retrieve our losses, and sustain our reputation, government equipped an expedition, under Admiral Christian, to convey twenty-seven thousand men, commanded by Sir Ralph Abercromby; fifteen thousand were to proceed from British, the residue from Irish, ports. The Admiral sailed from Spithead with a convoy exceeding two hundred sail; when they had passed Weymouth, the light breeze under which they were joyously proceeding, with all sails set, changed to a gale, and in the night became a violent hurricane.

Several of the transports and many lives were lost off the isle of Portland, and the whole expedition was rendered unavailing*. When the squadron, after being refitted at Spithead, again attempted to proceed, fresh storms again compelled a return to England; only a few transports, with about eighteen hundred men, escaped, and landed that small but welcome reinforcement in Saint Lucie; the division from Cork was not more fortunate; and it was not until after two months that the whole force was enabled effectually to sail for its destination.

CHAP.
XCVI.

1795.
December.

1796.
Feb.

Jamaica, the most valuable of our possessions in the West Indies, was also a source of great anxiety. Unassailed by any external enemy, its peace was interrupted, and the safety of its population menaced, by an alarming insurrection of the Maroons, a race originally descended from negroes, who, having been the property of Spaniards at the time of the surrender of the island to England, fled from a new subjection to woods and fastnesses in the interior, where they maintained themselves in a state of predatory independence, under the sway of commanders whom they styled captains. An internal war between them and the British was terminated by a regular treaty†, in which their perfect freedom, together with the exclusive possession of certain lands, were granted; they had liberty to travel in all parts of the island, and to trade, if licensed, in all public markets. They covenanted to observe a peaceful conduct, to submit to the laws of the island in all contests with white inhabitants, and not to protect and shelter fugitive slaves, but return them to the British government. This last stipulation was inevitably violated. Attachments between the sexes occasioned many emigrations, which could not be controlled, and commercial intercourse produced a community of interests, which led to the reception of many slaves into the society of the Maroons; and these, leaving the territory to which they were restrained by the treaty, established themselves at the

1795.
Insurrection of
the Maroons
in Jamaica.

* See Annual Register, vol. xxxvii. p. *55.

† March 1st. 1738.

CHAP.
XCVI.

1795.

Cause of
dispute.

back of our settlements. Nature endowed these people with personal beauty, and great perfection in their corporeal senses; exercise and the pursuits of the chase made them strong, active, daring, and expert in the use of fire-arms. In half a century from the time of the treaty, their numbers had augmented from six to fourteen hundred. The territory which properly belonged to them was difficult of access to strangers, while to them it afforded innumerable advantages of defence, retreat, or concealment.

A contest with these people had its origin, not in any encroachment or act of violence on the part of the governors, or of any attempt to establish a principle or elect a form of government on theirs; but from that evil disposition which pride and the absence of instruction are so apt to generate. To preserve the British authority in its proper force, and to restrain crimes and encroachments, an officer, termed a superintendent, resided among them. Against Captain Craskell, who had been recently appointed to this office, they conceived a violent dislike; and they resented the whipping of two of their people, who had been convicted of larceny, by the hands of a slave. A meeting, for the purpose of reconciliation, was held in Trelawney Town*, their principal place: the complaints of the Maroons resolved themselves into three principal heads; the whipping of their delinquents by the hands, not of a public officer, but of a slave, hired to punish slaves, while the sufferers were by the treaty free men; the insufficiency of the lands granted for their subsistence, which, while their numbers had been so largely increasing, were worn out; and the desire to remove Captain Craskell, and reinstate his predecessor, Major James. To these complaints it was promised, without admitting their justice, that attention should be paid, and an appearance of contentment was restored.

Still jealousy and distrust prevailed in the govern-

* From this circumstance the insurgents are generally called "the Trelawney Maroons;" another body of the same people was in hostility with them, and friendly to the British government.

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Hostilities
commenced.

August 5.

8th.

10th.
Treatment of
the Maroons.

War.

ment; they believed the Maroons to be in confederacy with the revolted people in Saint Domingo, instigated by democratical agents, and encouraged by intelligence that almost all the military force in Jamaica was departed on other services. They also believed that a general revolutionary insurrection of the slaves was arranged; and, on these suspicions, corroborated by corresponding appearances, hostile measures were decreed. Six of their captains, although furnished with regular passports, were seized at Landoverly, and put in irons, and a threatening and boastful message was sent, apprizing them of the preparations made; of the rewards offered for their heads, and commanding every Maroon capable of bearing arms, to appear before the governor at Montego Bay, and to bring in all strange negroes as prisoners. Colonel Sandford, being sent to Trelawney, with one hundred and thirty dragoons, was joined by many gentlemen, who were confident that the Maroons would speedily surrender; and Lord Balcarres, the commander in chief, advanced with the eighty-third regiment, which he posted within a mile and a half from the Maroon town.

Divided in opinion, and hopeless for the most part of a successful contest, the Maroons, in order to ascertain the probable effect of submission, dispatched thirty-seven of their body, with a chief named Montague, from Trelawney town, to surrender their arms at head quarters; they were all, except their chief, bound with their hands behind, and put in prison; two of them, selected by Captain Craskell, were liberated and sent to their brethren to persuade them to give up their arms; but, incensed at the late transaction, the main body burst into acts of open violence, set fire to both their towns, and retired to the settlement of Schaw Castle.

A war of a strange and desultory description ensued. Several skirmishes were fought, and many unimportant enterprises attempted. The resistance made by untaught savages put military tactics and skill at defiance; Colonel Walpole, after a time, took the chief command; but general engagements were not

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August and
September.

hazarded; towns were not fortified and defended in such a manner as to afford scope for military skill; plans for cutting off provisions were effected in vain against men who always knew where they could possess themselves of such supplies as they required; nor was defeat of great importance to those who never risked many men in action, and who knew how to retreat to places where they could neither be pursued nor surrounded.

The Maroons were divided into two parties; the Trelawney, and the Accompong, who hated each other, and hopes were entertained that the latter would influence the others to submit; but the messenger employed to make the proposal was not permitted to depart alive from the meeting at which he had presented himself. Some young men, who had formerly engaged in hunting parties with the Maroons, and were acquainted with their places of safety and means of retreat, offered to form a corps to act against them; but, being refused their request to name the officer who should conduct them, withdrew their proposal. Parleys produced no satisfactory results, and menaces only provoked a mode of conduct demonstrative of a determination to die rather than submit. At a meeting of the Assembly, the abstract given of the loss sustained by government was sixty-one killed, of whom two were officers of rank,* and sixteen wounded, while not a man was discovered to have been slain among the insurgents: they had also plundered and burnt several houses, and carried away many negroes.

Sept. 22nd.

Against such an enemy, never to be brought to a general or fixed opposition, fierce in conflict, swift in escape, possessed of an exact knowledge of the scene of exertion, and secure of retreat into unapproachable fastnesses or impenetrable recesses, the usual modes of warfare must be employed in vain: military skill was unavailing, where no regular mode of military opposition was relied on, and security could not be attained where life and property were

* Colonel Finch and Captain Oldham.

always open to destruction from a foe whose enterprises were limited to ambushes, surprises, and destruction. The state of the island was truly alarming, for, could the Maroons have given to their resistance an appearance of success and stability, there was every reason to fear that the slaves would be induced, through the intrigues of external enemies, and the fermentation of ill-governed spirits among themselves, to forego their present loyal and submissive principles, and join the insurgents, or form for themselves a similar system.

Under these circumstances, the legislature of Jamaica sent Colonel Quarrell, as a commissioner to the governor of Cuba, to obtain, by purchase, a small number of blood-hounds to subdue the Maroons. It could not escape the penetration of those who proposed and supported this measure that it would be subject to much animadversion; but necessity, a knowledge of the success with which it had recently been resorted to on the Mosquito shore, and a resolution that the dogs should not be used for any purpose of destruction, decided the question.

Colonel Quarrell was to treat for a number of dogs of a peculiar breed, and their proprietors and directors, called Chasseurs del Rey. The dogs are of the size of a large hound, with a hard, rough hide, and very strong and swift. They are trained, by the chasseurs, to the utmost degree of docility; and so disciplined, that they will not, except when resisted, kill the object they pursue. The Chasseurs, under the control of a government officer called the Alcade Provinciale, are principally employed in discovering and bringing in runaway slaves or criminals, for which they are eminently qualified by the strength, firmness, and elasticity of their bodies, the lightness of their dress, and of their arms. The hounds, when they find a fugitive, do not assail, but bark at him; and by a threatening growl compel him to remain motionless until the arrival of the Chasseur. They are much dreaded by negroes of every description.

While the negotiation for these auxiliaries was pending, uncertain news arrived of the peace con-

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Application for
blood-hounds
to Cuba.

Their powers
and qualities.

They are
finally
obtained.

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cluded between France and Spain; and the probability that it would occasion a different relation between the mother country and Great Britain added to the delays, already sufficiently vexatious, arising from the hesitative and dilatory disposition of the Spaniards. At length, Colonel Quarrell effected an agreement with thirty Besucal Chasseurs, entered into articles by which each man was to take three hounds to Jamaica, to remain three months, on stipulated terms of pay and sustenance.

December 14.
Effect of their
arrival in
Jamaica.

After surmounting many difficulties and dangers, during an absence of seven weeks, the commissioner landed in Jamaica, where he found the state of affairs truly lamentable. The Maroons had derived from success and experience, boldness and confidence: they had established means of communication, by which they gained the earliest intelligence; and their projected enterprizes threatened serious dangers. The arrival of the new succours reversed the picture. Hope and gladness revisited the planters, while terror and despair prevailed among the insurgents. By judicious management on the part of General Walpole, all hostile conflict was avoided: the Maroons listened eagerly to proposals of peace, and a treaty was speedily concluded. Its conditions were few, and apparently simple; but they occasioned much diversity of opinion, and, finally, a total departure from the system intended. The insurgents were humbly to implore pardon; to go to such place and settle on such lands as the legislature should allot, and to give up all runaways. By a separate article, General Walpole covenanted that none of the Maroons should be sent from the island; and the treaty was ratified by Lord Balcarres. Thus was peace restored; but confidence did not ensue. Disputes arose, which afterward gave a totally different aspect to affairs*.

21st.

State of the
public mind.

Amid all these gloomy appearances in our domestic, colonial, and foreign relations, it could not be concealed or doubted that the friends of government felt a proper,

* Chiefly from Dallas's History of the Maroons.

although not abject or unmanly, sense of their position. The confidence of the minister was not founded on his preponderating talent, the firmness of his adherents, or the favour of his Sovereign alone, although he was not inclined to undervalue these advantages; it rested mainly on the strong and immoveable good sense and soundly judging mind of the great and influential body of his countrymen, acting upon and guiding the feelings of those who might else have been seduced. Vain were the declamations of party, ineffectual the clamours and struggles of sedition and impiety: the people, true to their own interest, retained their attachment to their real friends. The consequence is well expressed by a judicious American writer, who says, "This country is still fresh as a youthful bride-groom, of which nothing can afford a clearer proof than the present complaints among one party of the moneyed men, that they had not permission to supply the minister with eighteen millions at £4. 13s. 6d. per cent. interest. This loan bears above ten per cent. advance in the market; although there is no covenant on the part of government not to open a new one. Indeed, it is expected that a considerable sum will be borrowed for the Emperor; and so high is the spirit of the people upon the late successes of the Austrian armies, that he may have just as much as he chooses to ask for*." In one respect, the situation of the minister was improved: he had no longer to regret the separation of an old adherent. Pleased with opinions he was known to entertain in favour of peace, Mr. Wilberforce had obtained a renewal of their intimacy; and, from the beginning of the session, particularly on the treason and sedition bills, had warmly exerted himself, both in Parliament and without, in support of government†.

Soon after the termination of the recess, Mr. Grey introduced the subject of peace by moving an address, desiring his Majesty to take steps for communicating

1796.
February 15.
Mr. Grey's
motion for
peace.

* Letter from Gouverneur Morris, in London, to General Washington, 19th December, 1795.—Sparks's Life of Gouverneur Morris, vol. iii. p. 61.

† Life of William Wilberforce, vol. ii. pp. 110, 112, et seqq.

directly to the executive government of the French republic his readiness to meet any disposition to negotiation on their part; with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect.

This motion was supported by the mover and Mr. Fox alone, and no one spoke in opposition to it but Mr. Pitt. Two months, it was said, had elapsed since the transmission of his Majesty's message; three since the delivery of his speech, in which the possibility of peace was admitted; during that time, the most favourable opportunities for negotiating had occurred, and yet no advance toward the desired object appeared to have been made. Ministers had, indeed, changed their language; the preservation of social order, the safety of the regular government, or the extirpation of doctrines hostile to our tranquillity, were no longer the points of contest; but, while they were deluding the people with hopes of peace, and while they had pacific professions in their mouths, a new campaign, with all its expenses and calamities, was to be enterprized. The French were no longer spoken of as the avowed enemies of God and man, of virtue, social order, happiness, and humanity; we had no objection to consider them as a republic, one and indivisible, founded on the basis of liberty, equality, fraternity, and the rights of man.

Mr. Grey dwelt, in the usual terms, on the manner in which we had thrown upon the French every sort of abuse: if, at one time, they had published propositions, justly accounted hostile to every sort of good government, they had all been directly and unequivocally retracted. The refusal to open a negotiation on former occasions was referred to with a view of shewing that the opportunities we then possessed were superior to any now in our power; and Mr. Fox drew a highly coloured picture of the improved and commanding situation of the enemy, in contrast with what it had been when they did not hold an inch of ground beyond the boundaries of old France. Many inferences were drawn from the conduct of other governments in making peace, and much argument was

employed to shew that such an attempt on our part would be both safe and wise. The governors of France would not dare to refuse reasonable terms; if they did, others would be appointed in their place. "When peace shall be proposed," Mr. Fox observed, "I hope and trust that it will not be offered on the dividing system, and that this country will never give its sanction to any such transaction as the infamous partition of Poland. I hope, when peace shall arrive, that the interests of humanity as well as of kings, and that of every particular state, will be consulted, and that tranquillity will be re-established on the broad basis of justice, in answer to the prayers of mankind, who are now fatigued with war, slaughter, and devastation."

In the name of other ministers, as well as his own, Mr. Pitt protested against the practice of being called upon, from day to day, from week to week, from time to time, to declare what were precisely their views on the posture of affairs, or the steps which they might think it necessary to adopt. Unquestionably, those who placed no confidence in ministers were intitled to oppose their measures and to question their sincerity; but whenever the House should adopt a motion like the present, and, instead of addressing his Majesty to remove his ministers, apply to take their business into their own hands, they would deprive the country of every chance of successful negotiation. He maintained the necessity of keeping together the remains of that confederacy, on which depended the only hope of impressing on the enemy a conviction of the necessity of yielding to reasonable terms, and bringing the war to a desirable conclusion. In order to give to a negotiation full effect, he said, we should not only keep up to the strict letter our engagements with our allies, but maintain with them full concert and harmony; and he took upon himself to assert, that, since his Majesty's message had been delivered, ministers had taken every measure consistent with the interests of the country, and the attention and regard due to her allies, to avail themselves of any opportunity, either to

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meet or to make overtures for negotiation. No etiquette with respect to taking the first step, no difficulty in finding a mode of making it, would be an obstacle to negotiation. The great point being what prospect there was of obtaining just and honourable terms, measures to ascertain that point were now in train; and if the enemy were sincere, they must speedily lead to a negotiation. If the exhausted state of the enemy should incline them to set on foot a treaty, a peace must be very different in its terms from any which their public declarations had, for a long time past, seemed to indicate: if this were not the case, a speedy peace would be impossible. He would not wish for any but an honourable peace.

The motion was rejected.*

March 10.
Mr. Grey
moves for a
Committee on
the state of the
nation.

Mr. Grey again appealed to the House, by moving that it should resolve itself into a committee to consider on the state of the nation. His speech, of course, embraced a general review of every topic relative to the war and the position of the country. He treated on the augmentation of the national debt by seventy-seven millions, requiring new taxes to the amount of two millions six hundred thousand pounds, and charged the minister with having expended enormous sums beyond the grants of Parliament, without estimate, and without their consent. He pursued this investigation through all the heads of expenditure, the navy, the army, and the ordnance, charging not only profusion, but an illegal appropriation of the sums granted. In conclusion, he entreated the House to look at the pressure which was felt by their constituents, and called upon the independent country gentlemen to vote for the inquiry. The great danger they had to dread was, the overgrowing influence of a minister, whose conduct was hostile to the principles of the constitution, and which it was their duty to destroy:

“ Non Hydra secto corpore fermior,
Vinci dolentem crevit in Herculem.

It was a monster, which, if that house did not destroy, would assuredly destroy the country.

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Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Steele had not a very difficult task in answering the observations of the mover; and he received a homely, but forcible reproof from Sir Gregory Page Turner, who, although desirous of peace, did not think its attainment would be forwarded by the continual production of motions, displaying to the enemy the situation of the country, the disclosure of which must retard negotiation.

1796.
Answered.

The sense of the House appeared in the majority which repelled the motion*.

rejected.

Mr. Grey also attempted to obtain the assent of the House to fifteen resolutions, charging the Chancellor of the Exchequer with acts of mal-administration with respect to the public money, which would, as he said, form the ground for articles of impeachment. He undertook to demonstrate that ministers had grossly misapplied the money of their constituents, and had been guilty of a flagrant violation of the law, to conceal which they had laid before the House an account of the distribution of the various grants which he would prove to be completely false. He would not comment on their gross mismanagement of the public money, where the application was within their discretion, but confine himself to three distinct charges. First, a violation of the express stipulation of the appropriation act, by applying grants to other services than those for which they were voted: secondly, to conceal this misconduct, they had presented false accounts: and, thirdly, that they had violated the act for regulating the office of Paymaster of the Forces. It would be for the House to determine whether they would enforce the act for appropriating the public revenue to its proper service, or allow the dispensing power of a minister to supersede the authority of the law, and the discretion of the executive power to supplant the wisdom of the constitution.

His motion on
the misappli-
cation of
public
money.
May 6th.

Mr. Pitt expressed his happiness in finding an Mr. Pitt.

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opportunity to discuss regularly and precisely certain topics which had been loosely thrown out at times when business of importance pressed on the attention of the House. Pursuing the order of discussion adopted by the mover, he made a powerful and luminous defence of all the proceedings which had been impugned; shewing the necessity for deviating in some degree from the strict letter of the statute, vindicating his measures both by reason and precedent, and shewing that many of the imputed charges were unfounded or exaggerated.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox, with his accustomed ability, replied to the arguments of the minister; and the House, on the motion of Mr. Steele, passed to the order of the day*.

Negotiation
attempted.

While these motions were proceeding, ministers were making a sincere, though not very hopeful, effort to open a negotiation. After a residence of some weeks in Paris, M. de Jacobi, a minister from Prussia, made some intimation to the British government, as a common friend to all the belligerents; and, soon after their elevation to power, the Directory had sent an agent, named Poterat, to Vienna; and he had obtained several audiences of the minister, Baron Thugut, not as a person endowed with a public character, but as a mere private traveller, for the purpose of gaining a knowledge of the views of that cabinet with respect to peace. Thugut demanded, as indispensable preliminaries, that Great Britain, Sardinia, and the empire, should be included in the treaty; that the Low Countries and the states of the empire occupied by the French armies should be restored; and that France should no longer intermeddle in the affairs of the United Provinces.

Mr. Wick-
ham's proposal.
March 8.

To ascertain the views of the French government, Mr. Wickham, our minister in Switzerland, wrote to M. Barthélemy, the French Ambassador at Basle, submitting to him three questions. 1. Was there a disposition in France to open a negotiation with his

Majesty and his allies for the re-establishment of a general peace, by sending ministers to a congress? 2. Would there be a disposition to communicate the general grounds of a pacification, such as France would be willing to propose, in order that his Majesty and his allies might examine in concert whether they might serve as the foundation of a negotiation? 3. Or would there be a desire to propose any other way for arriving at the same end? Mr. Wickham also declared that he was authorized to receive an answer to these questions, and transmit it to his court; but not in any manner to enter into negotiation or discussion.

26th.
Answer.

After the lapse of eighteen days, Mr. Wickham received an answer, written by authority of the Directory, expressing their ardent desire to procure a just, honourable, and solid peace. The step taken by Mr. Wickham would have afforded them a real satisfaction, if his declaration, that he had no order or power to negotiate, did not give room to doubt of the sincerity of the pacific intentions of his court. If it was true that England, beginning to know her own interests, wished to open again for herself the sources of plenty and prosperity; if she sought for peace with good faith; would she propose a congress, of which the necessary result must be to render all negotiations needless? Or would she confine herself to the asking in a vague manner, that the French government should point out any other way for obtaining the same object? Intimating that the sole motive for this proceeding was a desire to obtain for the British government the favourable impression which always accompanies the first overtures for peace, while it was hoped that they would produce no effect; and observing, by way of contrast, that the Directory had no guides to its policy but openness and good faith, they said that the constitutional act did not permit them to consent to any alienation of that which, according to the existing laws, constituted the territory of the republic. With respect to the countries occupied by the French armies, and which had not been united to France, they,

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April 10.
Observations.

as well as other interests, political and commercial, might become the subject of a negotiation, which would present to the Directory the means of proving how much it desired to attain speedily to a happy pacification.

On this answer, Lord Grenville most justly observed, that its tone and spirit, the nature and extent of its demands, and the manner of announcing them, were remote from any disposition for peace. In conformity with this opinion, it is observed* that the answer of the French government was equivalent to a refusal to treat; for it laid down, by implication, a preliminary article that France should retain and England surrender all conquests previously made. It rejected, too, the idea of a congress, that certain means of effecting a general peace, if sincerely desired. If it were incompatible with the policy of the republic to conclude peace at once with all the opposed cabinets, England, on her side, could discover no sufficient guarantee, nor any evident integrity, in the government of France, which should induce her to abandon her allies by a separate peace.

Proposals of
Baron Degelman.

At the same time, Baron Degelman, the imperial minister in Switzerland, had pursued nearly the same course with Mr. Wickham, and with a similar result. In fact, the directors were desirous of war, to confirm their authority, acquire resources, and support their armies. We shall obtain a stable peace, they said, such as the French people can alone desire, by the prevalence of our arms. Cease then to complain that the government has not had recourse to more active negotiations. For four years, the nation has had hardly any relation with foreign governments, but through its victories: she maintains scarcely any ambassadors; the science of diplomacy has passed from cabinets into camps; her soldiers are her negotiators; and now our preparations for war must be our negotiators for peace†.

* *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 289.

† *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 285 à 292. The papers referred to are in *Le Moniteur*, du 21 Avril, 1796.—*Parliamentary History*, vol. xxxii. p. 1407.—*Annual Register*, vol. xxxviii. p. *209, and other collections.

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Mr. Fox's
motion for
an address.

As ministers could no longer be charged with refusing to treat, Mr. Fox, at a late period of the session, made a vehement attack on them for the manner and means they had adopted. In a speech of nearly four hours' duration, he recapitulated all the objections he had made to the commencement and conduct of the war; dwelt on all the disasters of the country and successes of the enemy, and moved a long address to his Majesty, stating most of the topics which formed his speech, and concluding with this sentence: "Until
" ministers shall, from a real conviction of past errors,
" appear inclined to regulate their conduct on a different system, we can neither give any credit to the
" sincerity of their professions of a wish for peace, nor
" repose any confidence in their capacity for conducting a negotiation to a prosperous issue. Odious as
" they are to an enemy, who must still believe them
" secretly to cherish those unprincipled and chimerical projects which they have been compelled in public
" to disavow, contemptible in the eyes of all Europe,
" from the display of insincerity and incapacity which
" has marked their conduct; our only hopes rest on
" his Majesty's royal wisdom and unquestioned affection for his people, that he will be graciously pleased
" to adopt maxims of policy more suited to the circumstances of the times than those by which his
" ministers appear to have been governed, and to direct his servants to take measures, which, by differing essentially, as well in their tendency as in the
" principle upon which they are founded, from those
" which have hitherto marked their conduct, may give
" this country some reasonable hope, at no very distant
" period, of the establishment of a peace suitable to
" the interests of Great Britain, and likely to preserve
" the tranquillity of Europe."

As Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt were the only speakers in the debate, it may be considered a sort of intellectual duel; and, as the general matters had been copiously and frequently discussed on former occasions, it will not be necessary to enter into the general argu-

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Mr. Fox's
argument.

ment, but only to recapitulate a few leading points urged on both sides.

Having laid down as an indisputable proposition, that we had no immediate prospect of peace, Mr. Fox introduced an observation which had been used by an ancient orator, the greatest, perhaps, the world ever saw; Demosthenes used this brilliant, and no less solid, argument, in the introduction to one of his noblest orations. When he observed the conduct and the fate of the Athenians, and compared their calamities with the mismanagement of their rulers; this mismanagement, so far from being a cause of despair, he directly stated as a ground of hope. "If," said he, "they had fallen into these misfortunes by the course of natural and irremediable causes, then, indeed, there would be reason for despair; if, on the contrary, they are the fruits of folly and misconduct, it may be possible, by wisdom and prudence, to repair the evil." In like manner, if our policy had been erroneous, and our measures ill conducted, we might still entertain some hope, because our errors might be corrected, and the losses from our misconduct retrieved.

He adverted with triumph to the minister's speech in 1792, when he proposed a reduction of taxes, and flattered the country with the hope of fifteen years' peace*. This was full two years and a half after the first revolution in France, after the king had been compelled to return to Paris, after the National Assembly had annihilated the titles and destroyed the feudal tenures of the nobility; confiscated the lands of the church, banished part of the clergy, and compelled those who remained to take an oath contrary, in many instances, to the dictates of their conscience; then it was that this prospect of fifteen years' peace was held out. It was after the King of France had been made, as was said at the time, to stand in a splendid pillory, on the fourteenth of July, that this expectation of last-

* Vol. v. p. 84.

ing tranquillity was raised. Had not the House a right to conclude that, in the opinion of the King's ministers, these events interfered so little with their system of neutrality—were in so small a degree connected with the interests of the country, as not even to render the duration of tranquillity for fifteen years uncertain.

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Mr. Fox reviewed, in his accustomed manner, all the events of the war, censuring this country for not having interposed as a mediator, instead of engaging in it. Our conduct he ascribed to three causes. The reception given to the deputation from the Corresponding Society; the decree of the nineteenth of November; and the attack on the Dutch monopoly of the navigation of the Scheldt. The first was too insignificant for a serious answer; of the decree, we had never demanded a repeal or explanation; and the complaint about the Scheldt might have been obviated by negotiation. The murder of the King, or, as he perseveringly termed it, the unfortunate event of his death, gave him an opportunity of eulogizing the talents of Mr. Burke (although he deprecated the application of them to the subject of the French revolution), and paying a high tribute to his virtues. "This able man," he said, "represented my proposition for recognizing the government of France, as a petition to France for peace, by throwing ourselves at her feet, a surrender of our beloved sovereign's head to the block; in fine, it was entirely to give up the constitution. The unfortunate event had then taken place; but, by this petition or message to the Directory, ministers had acknowledged the power of those very men who pride themselves on the part they took in promoting it, and who celebrated it by an anniversary festival."

After recurring to many often-repeated arguments on the conduct of our allies and ourselves; towns taken by the Emperor in Alsace, in the name of the King of Hungary; the capture of Valenciennes for the Emperor; and other events of former campaigns; he entered into a vehement description of the merits,

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virtues, and sufferings of La Fayette; the firmness and constancy of his lady; the treatment of Alexander Lameth, who, seeking refuge in this country, had, after a fortnight's residence, been sent away, by virtue of the Alien Act; and of General Dumouriez, toward whom the conduct of the allies had been most impolitic.

He censured, in every particular, the late attempt at negotiation. Why had it not been entered upon when the confederacy against France was in full force? Why delayed three months after his Majesty's message? The pretence set up by the French, that they could not give up any territories which had been consolidated with the republic, was, indeed, a matter of regret; but it doubled his indignation against those ministers who had deferred any proposition for peace until there was no prospect of obtaining it on safe and honourable terms. We had completely failed in all the objects for which the war was commenced. Holland was lost, the King of France exiled, and the aggrandizement and power of the republic more alarming than ever. Of our allies, those who had been the first to treat, had sustained the least injury; as was shewn by Prussia and Spain; while the King of Sardinia, whose good faith had been so loudly vaunted, must be compelled, for his own safety, to accept such terms as the Directory might vouchsafe to grant. The Empress of Russia had indeed suffered nothing: her only object in the alliance was to plunder Poland, in which she had been collaterally supported by England: a mortal blow to another professed object of the war, the balance of power. Poland was abandoned to its fate, suffered to be sacrificed, annihilated, destroyed, for the sake of those absurd and vicious principles which governed the policy of ministers, and which had involved us in war, and which must now be deserted. To save the country, we must retrace our steps: all other remedies would prove mere palliatives, rather mischievous than useful; and he recommended a complete change of system.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt noticed, with some pleasantry, the manner

in which the authority of Demosthenes had been called in to enforce an axiom, indisputable in itself, but inapplicable to the present discussion. It might be useful to take a review of past events, in order to apply to our present situation the lessons of experience; to examine the sources of former errors, and the causes of existing calamities, in order to obviate future misconduct, and, if possible, to procure redress for present evils; but whatever might be the difference of opinions with respect to the origin and conduct of the war; whatever the events which had occurred during its progress, or the pressure of the calamities it had occasioned; under our present circumstances, compelled, as we were, to continue it, by the ambition and obstinacy of the enemy; left without the option of a safe and honourable retreat; a mere appeal to past events could neither be necessary nor proper: prudence would require us to dismiss all retrospect, in order to look to the means of future exertion, and the prospect of probable success. If, by the refusal of the enemy to accede to fair and honourable terms of peace, that period was now arrived which Mr. Fox formerly declared would secure his cordial support to the continuance of the war; that period which, by exhibiting in the strongest light the unjust policy and unreasonable ambition of the enemy, which he had pronounced would undoubtedly unite all England and divide all France, he would better have fulfilled the pledge so solemnly given, by admitting the necessity and justice of prosecuting the war, than by occupying a wide field of general reasoning, and entering into a minute historical detail of past events. His Majesty's ministers were accused of having plunged the nation unnecessarily into a bloody and expensive war: a charge in which Parliament were implicated; because, on the most mature consideration, they had declared that they considered the present to be a just and necessary war.

On his financial statement in 1792, Mr. Pitt said, "It is true, indeed, that I felt not less satisfaction in exhibiting to the country the high degree of prosperity to which it had then reached, than the right

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“honourable gentleman seems to feel in giving his melancholy picture of its present reduced situation : and it was a singular circumstance, that, when that period of prosperity was past, the right honourable gentleman should dwell on the retrospect rather rapidly, although it seemed but little to affect him at the time it was enjoyed.”

In general policy, he admitted the partition of Poland to be unjust ; but it does not go, as was said, to overturn the balance of power ; for that country being nearly divided equally among three great powers, could little contribute to the undue aggrandizement of either. But how strange did it seem in him to inveigh so strongly against the partition of Poland, who had so vehemently censured ministers for their endeavours to prevent the partition of Turkey. The establishment of the principle, that this country could not interfere to prevent that partition, precluded the possibility of any interference with respect to Poland.

Mr. Pitt then reproduced the real causes of complaint : the famous decree of the nineteenth of November ; the reception given and encouragement held out to seditious men, delegated from this country, who, with treason in their mouths and rebellion in their hearts, were received, welcomed, and caressed by the legislature of France ; the declaration of that government against all old established systems ; and their offer to join the rebellious subjects of any state to overturn their government. It was contended that this obnoxious decree was subsequently rescinded. But what was the explanation given ? That the French would not interfere in the government of another country, unless they were of opinion that the majority wished for a change. He also proved the fallacy of their pretending to renounce aggrandizement, by their conduct toward Belgium, and their claims with respect to the Scheldt. In every point of view, the French had been the aggressors ; and yet the mover required that we should bow down before the enemy, with the cord about our necks ; that we should abjure our recorded professions, and receive a severe, although un-

deserved, sentence of condemnation. He then recapitulated the events of the war, to shew that neither in 1793, nor after the campaign in 1794, had there been any external circumstances, or any indication on the part of the enemy, to warrant a hope of successful negotiation, or of obtaining terms better than those we could now expect.

As to La Fayette, he merely repeated what had already been decided—that it did not belong to this country to interfere on his behalf; and ministers, feeling no antipathy to Lameth, had felt great reluctance in ordering him to quit the kingdom; but their motives were not a proper subject of discussion. The act of Parliament had vested in them a discretionary power, which they must be allowed to exercise.

He vindicated the proceedings of government, in the late attempt at negotiation, from the imputation of insincerity; observing that there was one ground which Mr. Fox had not stated, but which the Directory strongly rested upon in their answer—the proposal for holding a general congress. This they had declined and reproached, but had not attempted to substitute any other. A congress was the only mode in which wars were concluded in all cases wherein allies were concerned, ever since the peace of Munster, the two last treaties only excepted. If they really thought ministers insincere, their policy would have been to make just and moderate demands, which, if rejected, would exhibit in the face of the world that want of candour and that appetite for war so unjustly attributed to us. We do not, he concluded, shut the door against negotiation whenever it can be fairly entered upon; but the enemy, far from meeting us, say plainly they cannot listen to any conditions but such as in honour we cannot accept. The terms of peace which the right honourable gentleman pointed at, and which, after all, he considers as very disadvantageous, are, that the French may retain their conquests in Europe, and that we should keep our acquisitions in the colonies. What, however, is the proposal of the Directory? No less than

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this: that every thing should be restored to them, and that they in return should give up nothing. It is also urged that we were to blame in so abruptly breaking off the negotiation, and communicating the result to the world. To this I answer, that the terms proposed by the enemy cut short all farther treaty; and as to the communication of the result, it will have the important consequence of dividing the opinions of France, and uniting those of England.

Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Francis, Mr. Grey, and several eloquent members of opposition, are named in the division; but as none of them addressed the chair, it is fair to conclude that they considered the question as exhausted; after a short reply from Mr. Fox, the division was five to one against the address*.

Motion in the
House of
Lords.

On the same day the Earl of Guilford made a motion, in the same terms, in the House of Lords. It was supported by the Dukes of Bedford and Grafton, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and the Earl of Lauderdale; and opposed by Lords Sydney, Hawkesbury, Fitzwilliam, Grenville, and Mulgrave. It was negatived on a division†.

Finance.
1795.
December 7.
Loan.

In a committee of ways and means, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that he had negotiated a loan of eighteen millions, which would be advanced at £4 13s. 6d. per cent, and mentioned the new taxes which must be imposed. A strong competition for this contract had arisen in the city between two parties, of which Mr. Boyd and Mr. Morgan were the ostensible heads. Mr. William Smith espousing the cause of Mr. Morgan, the unsuccessful competitor, stated, in the House of Commons, the undue, if not corrupt, manner in which the contract had been granted, and alleged that, for the public, a better bargain might have been effected. Mr. Fox, reserving his general objections to another occasion, declared strongly against the acts by which competition had been prevented. The resolutions moved by Mr. Pitt passed without a division.

* 216 to 42.

† 110 to 10. Copied from Hansard's Parliamentary History, vol. xxxiii. p. 1138.

Mr. Smith then moved for a committee to inquire into the circumstances attending the negotiation of the loan; to which Mr. Pitt thankfully assented, but objected to its being a committee of the whole House, as it would occasion a great interruption of business. Mr. Sheridan disapproved of a select committee, because it would defeat inquiry. If they were sent to scramble up stairs, a few gentlemen in the confidence of the minister might attend, although others would not; and thus they would have a partial report: on a division*, his opposition failed. A select committee was appointed, with power to send for persons, papers, and records; all members who came were to have voices, and they were to report evidence to the House. After several days, Mr. William Smith produced their report, which, containing written and oral evidence only, filled fifty pages in the journals†, and founded on it forty resolutions, condemning the conduct of the minister, the terms of the loan, and the principles on which it had been made. It would be impossible, by any detail of the arguments used, to impart the slightest interest to this discussion. Mr. Sylvester Douglas made a clear and powerful analysis of the whole transaction as it appeared in the evidence. Although only one of the forty resolutions was before the House, he would take the liberty to answer them altogether, and would begin by declaring that every one of the honourable gentlemen's thirty-nine articles‡, which was framed for the sake of establishing the fortieth, was either founded in misapprehension, suppression, partial statement, or perversion of evidence, and mixed up with much false argument, unfounded insinuation, and misapplication of principles, and, above all, so obviously offered to the House as the ground-work of a most unjust and dangerous accusation, that he would object to them all. He therefore moved an amendment on the first, affirming generally the first article, that the principle

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1795.

15th.
Mr. W. Smith's
motion.

Committee
appointed.

1796.

Feb. 9.
22nd.
Report.

26th.
Resolutions
moved.

Amendment
proposed.

* 56 to 19.

† Vol. li. p. 310 to 360.

‡ This, being supposed to allude to Mr. Smith's religious persuasion as a Dissenter, produced a general laugh.

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of making loans by competition had been productive, in many instances, of great public advantage, but adding, which amounted to a negative of the others, that this principle could not be applied in its full extent to the bargain for the late loan, consistently with the peculiar circumstances of the case, and a due attention to the equitable claims of individuals. After some observations by Mr. Francis and Mr. Steele, the House, by the general effect of their vote, rejected Mr. Smith's resolution*, expressed general approbation of the terms of the loan and the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in every part of the transaction.

Tax on
legacies.

Among the taxes proposed was one on legacies. It was to be two per cent. on those above a certain amount, given to persons in the first collateral degree of relationship, and advancing to three, four, and six per cent. on those further removed or not at all of kin. The tax was to include both landed and personal estate; but not to operate on the actual possessions, or affect the first degrees of consanguinity: the widow and the direct descendant would be excepted.

The tax on
landed pro-
perty opposed
by Mr. Fox.

May 5.

It was found necessary to divide the measure, bringing in one Bill for imposing the duty on successions to real estates, the other on legacies of personal property. On the motion that the first of these should go into a committee, Mr. Fox said, that of all the shapes in which despotism had ever existed, that was the highest which rendered the sovereign heir to the whole capital of the country. This the present bill did in a very limited degree; but if the principle were once adopted, the progress was easy, and it was impossible to calculate how far it might be extended. Mr. Grey termed it a partial and bad mode of levying a land tax. This proposition was supported by Mr. Jekyll, but denied by the Attorney-General and Mr. Hawkins Browne. Sir William Pulteney and Mr. Alderman Newnham made several objections; and Lord Sheffield said, that, in preference

Mr. Grey.

Debated.

* 171 to 23.

to this tax, he would recommend a stamp on the transfer of stock. The motion was carried*.

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1796.

9th.

12th
Bill lost.

When it was proposed to take the report into consideration, Mr. Crewe attempted to frustrate the measure by postponing it for three months†. When the third reading was moved, Mr. Francis drew from the histories of Sardinia, Spain, and France, reasons against the measure. The motion was carried by an inconsiderable majority‡. On another question, a division less flattering took place||; and, finally, the members, on a division, being even§, and the Speaker giving his casting vote against proceeding immediately, Mr. Pitt, perceiving so many gentlemen unfriendly to the measure, moved a postponement for three months, and thus it was lost.

Against the other bill, the opposition was less successful. The chief objections were urged by Alderman Newnham, Mr. Fox, and Mr. William Smith, who deprecated the probable exposure of pecuniary circumstances. Mr. Grey added to these some observations on the hardship which would be sustained by persons who, although not illegitimate themselves, being derived from those who were so, would be considered as mere strangers; and so subjected to the highest rates of duties. To these objections, the Attorney-General opposed the fact, that, in other acts relating to legacies, passed in 1780, 1783, and 1789, similar circumstances existed, and no complaint of evil had arisen. On two divisions, the opposition counted the same numbers¶, and the bill passed.

Duty on
personal
property.

Passed.

In the House of Lords, the Earl of Lauderdale introduced a bill to suspend the operation of this measure until the beginning of the following year, in order that, before Christmas, it might be repealed. The bill having been read a first time, the Lord Chancellor informed the noble Earl that his proceeding was altogether irregular, as an act could not be repealed or altered during the session in which it had passed.

17th.
Lord Lauderdale's bill.

* 64 to 24. † 81 to 52. ‡ 48 to 46. || 54 to 53. § 54 to 54.
¶ 16 to 46; 16 to 64.

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Rejected.
Protest.
Tax on dogs
proposed.

April 5.

Lord Lauderdale undoubtedly knew this ordinary and indisputable principle: his bill was rejected; but he gained the opportunity of entering a protest on the journals, which was signed by no other peer.

Some sprightliness was infused into the business of finance by the persevering efforts of Mr. Dent to impose a tax on dogs. A petition being presented from Leicestershire, praying for such a measure, Mr. Dent proposed an annual tax of two shillings and six pence on every dog that was kept, except those used as guides for blind persons. This measure would promote the relief and benefit of the poor, lessen the rates, render provisions more cheap and plentiful, diminish the instances of hydrophobia, and, at the same time, open a considerable source of revenue. He calculated the population of the country to be ten millions; and these might compose two millions of families. Allowing a dog to each family, they would amount to two millions; but supposing them to be diminished one half, the tax would produce a revenue of one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds.

As the bill which Mr. Dent produced did not live to go into a committee, the attempt is mentioned as a specimen of honest pertinacity; as the foundation of a measure which was carried in a subsequent session; and as the cause of a lively, but unimportant debate, in which Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Courtenay displayed their characteristic talents.

25th.

Motion by Lord
Lauderdale on
the four-and-a-
half per cent.
duties.
March 4.

The Earl of Lauderdale, after an exposition of the nature and destination of the four-and-a-half per cent. duties arising in Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, and censuring the manner in which the amount had been applied in payment of pensions, proposed an address, requiring that it should be expended in repairing and erecting fortifications, and in other public uses, for the safety of those islands. Lord Grenville fully answered the historical statements which had been advanced, and vindicated the use made of the fund by precedents drawn from all times, under the sanction of all administrations, and of every Attorney

and Solicitor General during a whole century. The motion was lost on a division*; but the Earl indemnified himself by signing a solitary protest.

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April 8.
General Smith
on barracks.

General Smith made a strong appeal on the subject of barracks. The expense, £1,100,000, was a trifling object, when compared with the unconstitutionality of the measure. Barracks were already erected capable of containing thirty-four thousand troops, which was double the number of the usual peace establishment. From this fact, one of two inferences must follow; either that ministers had betrayed the trust of the nation, in needlessly squandering the public money, or that they meant to maintain a standing army, that (to borrow one of their own expressions) they might "exercise a vigour beyond the law." He proposed the appointment of a committee to investigate and report on the subject, contending that the money had been illegally employed, without the sanction of Parliament.

Mr. Windham admitted, that, in not submitting the expense to the judgment of the House, there had been a departure from strict form; but no inconvenience had arisen, and the public judgment had not been misled. The measure had received the approving judgment of the House in 1793, on a motion by Mr. M. A. Taylor†; and the event of that discussion was a virtual recognition of the principle acted upon. Barracks sufficient for twenty thousand men had been erected many years since; but they were calculated for the reception of infantry only; and, being placed in inconvenient situations, it had been found necessary to billet the soldiers on innkeepers; a practice unknown in any other country, unjust, and productive of much inconvenience and injury to the service. He next deduced from the statements, arguments to show that in all parts of the transaction a strict attention had been paid to economy.

Mr. Windham.

In the course of his speech, he urged on the necessity of keeping the soldiers apart from those preachers

Mr. Fox.

* 73 to 10.

† Vol. v. p 388.

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1796.

of sedition whose instructions would be subversive of all discipline; and adverted to a passage in *Le Médecin malgré lui* of Molière, where a pretended physician says, "If I cannot make him dumb, I will make you deaf." Mr. Fox, seizing on this argument, exclaimed, "What is the full meaning and extent of this doctrine? Can the troops be made partially deaf? Can they be prevented from listening to the voice of sedition, without, at the same time, shutting them up from the knowledge of those general principles of rational liberty, whose animating influence ought ever to inspire the soldiers of a free country? They ought not, he says, to be taught disobedience; but indiscriminate obedience is not the duty of an Englishman, whether a soldier or any other citizen. Where commands are illegal, it is his duty to resist them. It is not Mr. Paine, nor much more ingenious men, who, by what they say, can injure the constitution. Those are its real enemies who are constantly making practical comments on such authors. Paine says that our constitution is a mere farce, a mockery; that there is no real check upon the exercise of the powers of government. Do not ministers practically say the same? Do they not, day after day and year after year, pass acts in direct violation of the acknowledged principles of the constitution?"

A speech in this style produced no effect; the motion was rejected*.

Motion by the
Marquis of
Lansdowne.
May 2.

In the House of Lords, economy, mixed with topics of general politics, formed the ground of two motions. The Marquis of Lansdowne reviewed, with bitter censure, the operations of government, particularly in matters of expenditure, in disregard of the reports of parliamentary commissioners appointed on his motion in 1779; and complained of the undue influence acquired by the moneyed interest. On the present system, the Bank might be converted into a citadel in the midst of London, and stand in the place

of Parliament, between the King and the nation. He moved resolutions affirming that it was incumbent on the House to inquire whether any new offices had been created, old salaries increased on slight pretences, or unduly continued; and, on the whole, whether the public expenses had increased beyond the supplies annually granted. Many reflections on the origin and conduct of a war, bloody and expensive beyond example, without plan or object, were added; and the Marquis said, that in a situation so alarming, and so manifestly tending to destroy the confidence of the people in Parliament, which had for some years past been rapidly on the decline, it was necessary, by a timely revival of its ancient energy and integrity, to convince the people that their constitutional guardians were awake to the common danger, and determined, by firm measures of public order and reform, effectually to relieve the subject, and remedy evils, which, if still suffered to accumulate, would be past all remedy, and must terminate in public confusion.

Lord Grenville shewed how unfounded were some of these complaints, by referring to the many abolitions and retrenchments, in matters of official expenditure, which had taken place since the reports of the Commissioners in 1782; and Lord Auckland, more methodically, refuted the assertions of the noble mover, by placing in exact figures the comparative state of the commerce and finances of the country in 1783, the first year of peace, and the present time. The House shewed its sense of the matter by an unusually strong division*.

Lord Grenville.

On a subsequent day, the Earl of Lauderdale attempted to re-establish the propositions so unsuccessfully advanced, and made a great display of figures to refute the statement of Lord Auckland. He proposed fifteen resolutions; but he seems to have gained the only end he hoped for, by making his speech; for the previous question, being moved on his first resolution, was negatived without a division.

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1796.
Feb. 18.
Bill for
abolishing the
Slave-trade.

March 3, 7.

16.

lost.

April 11.
Mr. Francis's
motion.

Indefatigable in the cause which he cordially embraced as that of virtue, humanity, and religion, Mr. Wilberforce obtained leave, not without great opposition, to bring in a bill to abolish the slave-trade, at a period to be limited. It was truly observed by Mr. Pitt, that, on a subject which had been so often and so elaborately debated, it was not to be expected that any argument of great novelty could be adduced. Some assertions and contradictions took place with respect to the present state of the West India Islands, and leave was granted*. In its further progress, the bill was constantly opposed. On the motion for a second reading, and on that for going into a committee, divisions took place favourable to the measure†; and, in committee, the day of abolition was fixed for the first of March, 1797. But when it was moved that the report should be taken into consideration, the strength of the opponents was augmented; and, after a strenuous debate, the bill was lost by a very small majority‡.

Mr. Francis drew the attention of the House to the regulation of already existing slaves. He prefaced a speech of extraordinary length, by asserting, as he said, without a risk of contradiction, that, including the greatest learning by which the House was at all times adorned and sometimes instructed, there was no man here better qualified than himself to introduce a serious subject of any kind with a dull, tedious, elaborate exordium. His motion was for a Bill for the better regulation and improvement of slaves in the West Indies or America. His argument, beside a censure on Mr. Pitt, for not using the strength of his ministerial influence to effect the total abolition of the trade, consisted in an elaborate description of the hardships to which the slaves were subjected, and proposals for granting them many immunities, and endowing them with portions of land, clothing, food, and medicine, as an admission of their right to them; and therefore proposed a compulsory allowance of them for ever. Besides contradictions as to the sup-

* 93 to 67.

† 64 to 31, and 76 to 31.

‡ 74 to 71.

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1796.

posed facts which were adduced, several members, friendly to the abolition of the trade, remonstrated strongly against this attempt to dispose of the property of the planters by a legislation in which they were in no wise represented. Considering the use which had been made of this argument in the American war, it is astonishing that any plan, so diametrically opposed to it, should at this period have been proposed: but, after a debate of some duration, the mover declined pressing for a division, and permitted his proposition quietly to perish.

Before the result of their operations could be known, before even the terms or mode of their intended employment had been ascertained, General Macleod hastened to call attention to the use of blood-hounds in the war against the Maroons, as a question of much importance, not only to the honour of the House, and of the country, but to the interests of humanity for ages to come. Admitting that he possessed no information on the subject, except that derived from the newspaper, and a letter from a correspondent of his own, dated the fifth of January, he recited an extract from Robertson's History of America, narrating the account given by Bartholomeo de la Casas, of the cruelties practised by the Spaniards, asking whether the House would wink at such abominable practices? It was usual, in Cuba, for the Spaniards to feed their dogs with human flesh, that they might be unnaturally bloody and fierce; it was common, among the soldiers, to split a child in two, or cut up an Indian in quarters, and feast their dogs. Would the House sit careless, while fifty couple of blood-hounds were imported from Cuba, and thirty Chasseurs, to pursue the same bloody and inhuman sports? And who were the sportsmen? British subjects, British soldiers, and British officers! Surely Parliament would not suffer them to enjoy a chase that stained the character of the country, and would blot the annals of His Majesty's reign, as much as it had those of Philip the Second and Charles the Fifth of Spain. He moved for a communication of the intelli-

March 21.
General
Macleod on
the use of
Blood-hounds.

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1796.
Supported.

gence received by ministers, relating to the mode of carrying on this war.

Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Courtenay, supporting the motion, described the war as one of extermination; the unfortunate Maroons, by oppression, the breach of treaty on the part of the English, and in vindication of their rights, had been driven to take up arms. The cause was the public whipping of a poor wretch through the town for stealing a pig. Such was the pride of these independent people, that they preferred death to such an ignominious punishment. We had no right to try the man at all; as, by a stipulation in our treaty, the Maroons were exempt from all cognizance, except a tribunal of their own. Like all other savages, they had strong passions, and their resentment of injuries was indiscriminating. If we had broken the first article of the treaty, we must abide the consequences. We had no right to complain of the descents of the Maroons from their mountains, when our mode of warfare was so much worse than theirs.

Answer.

These vehement declamations were not answered in detail; but Mr. Dundas generally asserted facts and grounds directly opposite, stating that government possessed no information that could be offered to the house as authentic, and that the employment of these dogs was not in consequence of any direction of ministers here. If the Assembly of Jamaica had caused such an application of them to be made, ministers, on the first intimation, would adopt measures to prevent or prohibit their use in the manner so justly reprobated. After some observations from Mr. Barham and Mr. M. Robinson on one side, and Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Courtenay on the other, General Macleod withdrew his motion, still threatening that he had not relinquished the subject, but would stick to it as fast as the dogs did to their prey.

April 12.

Propositions relating to existing laws were brought forward: some with a view to real utility; others, perhaps, for the sake of popularity alone. On the mo-

tion of Mr. Abbot, a committee was formed to inspect and consider all temporary and all expiring laws of a public nature. A long report, made by him, was the foundation for many useful enactments*.

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Mr. Serjeant Adair presented a petition from the Quakers, complaining of hardships they sustained with respect to tithes: consistently with their religious principles, they could not pay them voluntarily; and, on default, a justice of peace might issue a warrant of distress, for sums not exceeding ten pounds. He proposed to extend this jurisdiction to all sums where the tithe was not questioned, and to take from the magistrate the power of electing whether he should send the defaulter to prison or distrain his goods. He also proposed to enable Quakers to give evidence in criminal, as in civil cases, on their solemn affirmation, without violating their religious scruples by taking an oath. A Bill passed the House of Commons; but, in the upper House, the Archbishop of Canterbury, considering the great importance of the question of right which it involved, and the late period of the session, moved its second reading on that day three months, which, after a few words from the Duke of Norfolk, the Bishop of Rochester, and the Lord Chancellor, was agreed to, and the Bill lost.

May 12.
April 21.
Quaker's
Relief Bill.

Lost.
May 14, 15.

Considering the punishment of death not to be attended with sufficient terror to deter men from the crimes of burglary and highway robbery, Mr. Jodrell moved to bring in a bill subjecting persons convicted of those offences to be anatomized, like those who had been guilty of murder. Mr. Buxton seconded the motion, because the measure, by increasing the materials for dissection, was likely to promote improvement in surgery; and Mr. Francis supported it from detestation of the crimes. Fortunately for humanity and the honour of the country, Mr. Serjeant Adair added to his great acquirements as a lawyer, the inestimable benefits derived from experience in many years' practice as Recorder of London. It was much to be lamented, he said, that there should

March 11.
Motion to
increase the
punishment of
burglary and
highway
robbery.

Judicious ob-
servations of
Serjeant
Adair.

* Journals, vol. li. p. 702.

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1796.

be suffered to exist in the criminal laws of this kingdom any thing which could operate as a deduction from the general admiration to which our judicial code was otherwise entitled. Unhappily, however, inequalities did exist in the classes and definitions of crimes, by which the severest penalties were attached to species of offence infinitely less obnoxious than others which were punished much more slightly. Were gentlemen aware that a ragged boy, who passed the most populous street in the metropolis after sunset, and who, taking out a pane of glass with his knife, and drawing out two-penny-worth of ribbon, or a pair of garters, was guilty of burglary, and must receive sentence of death? Was the person who took a few shillings without committing any violence, to be compared to the nocturnal way-laying murderer? Since the punishment of torture had been banished, little more than the penalty of death was left to be inflicted for offences the most foul and flagitious; and it was painful to reflect that it was not entirely reserved for murder and high treason: and that legislature would, in his opinion, act most unwisely which should be induced, on any account, to remove the barrier set up by God and nature between those and all other crimes. In this view of the subject he was supported by the Attorney-General and Mr. Fox, and the motion was negatived.

April 4.
Expulsion of
a member.

A court-martial having found a member of the House of Commons guilty of acting fraudulently, and in a scandalous and infamous manner, unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, he was cited to the bar, heard at large in his own defence, and finally expelled the House: the fact is memorable as a precedent.

May 2.

May 19.
Close of the
session.

In closing the session, his Majesty adverted, in terms of applause and thanks, to the exertions of both Houses, on all the difficult matters which had claimed their attention; and reviewed with satisfaction the provisions they had made for repressing sedition and civil tumults, and for decreasing the distresses of the people. On the subject of peace, he said—"You have omitted no opportunity to prove your just

“anxiety for the re-establishment of general peace
“on secure and honourable terms; but you have,
“at the same time, rendered it manifest to the world,
“that, while our enemies shall persist in dispositions
“incompatible with that object, neither the resources
“of my kingdom, nor the spirit of my people, will be
“wanting to the support of a just cause, and to the
“defence of all their dearest interests.”

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1796.

In the course of the session, a subject of discussion arose, less interesting in the debates than in the consequences. Of his own mere goodness, it is said, unsolicited by any one, and certainly not by him who was the object of it, the King bestowed on Mr. Burke two pensions, one of twelve hundred, and the other two thousand five hundred, pounds a year, payable from the civil list, and the four-and-a-half per cent. duties. Mr. Burke was, at the time, labouring under severe and incurable anguish of mind, evidently producing corporeal decrepitude, and destroying the springs of life, occasioned by the early death of his only son, his pride and his hope, which had occurred in the preceding year*.

Mr. Burke's pension.

1795.
October.

When the grant became known, it formed a theme of vehement abuse to those who personally hated Mr. Burke, or who were banded against the cause of which he was so able and conspicuous a supporter. In the newspaper most earnest and active in support of the opposition party, and now honoured with the confidence, and benefited by the assistance, of the members who composed it, a paragraph appeared, stating the extent of the royal donation; treating it as the reward of that political apostacy, and those baleful exertions, which, more than the meetings at Copenhagen-house, tended to incite and stir up the people to hatred and dislike, not of the good and greatly abused King, but of his corrupt ministers†.

Attacks on the grant.

On the day when this paragraph appeared, the Duke of Bedford, in a debate on the Treason Bill, treated the war as having been undertaken and obsti-

November 13.
Observations
of the Duke of
Bedford,

* 2 August, 1794. For particulars, and a delineation of the parent's feelings, see *Prior's Life of Burke*, vol. ii. p. 265, et seq.

† *Morning Chronicle*, 13th November.

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1795.

and Lord
Lauderdale.Answer of
Lord
Grenville.Mr. Burke's
pamphlet.

nately prosecuted, without regard to the interest or wishes of the people, and spoke of pensions almost unparalleled in profusion, lavished on the very man once distinguished as the advocate of rigid parsimony; but whose conduct and writings had, in an eminent degree, contributed to create and continue the war, and cause all its consequent enormous expenses. The Earl of Lauderdale, in terms less delicate and cautiously chosen, expanded this censure, and named Mr. Burke as the man who was to have an enormous pension for endeavouring to inculcate doctrines adverse to the principles of freedom. To these reflections, Lord Grenville liberally answered, that he was proud to boast of the part he had taken in recommending the pension, and ready to take his share of responsibility; a public reward was never more merited than that in question. The public would feel a lasting gratitude to the man who had opposed the shield of reason and sound argument, to defend the wise establishments of our ancestors against the daring inroads of the most pernicious principles ever broached by folly, enthusiasm, and madness.

Depressed as he was in spirits, weighed down by domestic calamity, and enfeebled in body, the old warrior was not sufficiently subdued, tamely to bear the assaults thus directed against him; again he took up his arms, and shewed his never-failing powers in all their mastery, in a pamphlet intitled "a Letter to a noble Lord."

To analyze this able production is not within the scope of this work; but, as a general outline, it may be observed, that of Lord Lauderdale his notice is slight, rather contemptuous, treating him less as a separate or substantive antagonist, than as an adjunct to the Duke, against whom his principal animadversions are directed. He considered, as a satisfactory proof of the benefit of his exertions, his having increased the displeasure of the Duke of Orléans or the Duke of Bedford; and his falling under the censure of Citizen Brissot, or of his friend the Earl of Lauderdale; and they were intitled to his thanks for having so faithfully and so fully

acquitted, toward him, whatever arrear of debt was left undischarged by the Priestleys and the Paines.

Having vindicated himself from the charge of departing from his own principles of economy, he proceeded, in a strain more personal, to discuss the difference between a moderate grant conferred on him by a good and virtuous sovereign, and the enormous benefactions profusely lavished on the Duke's ancestor, the first Lord Russell, by Henry the Eighth.

He adverted then to his Grace's partiality to French principles, and his too condescending familiarity with those underlings of faction who professed them; warning him of the inevitable consequences, should their exertions be crowned with success. The duty of insurrection and love of plunder would make his immense property an irresistible allurement; while ingratitude, their four cardinal virtues compacted and amalgamated into one, would repel every claim he could advance to consideration or forbearance. They would laugh at his parchment and his wax; his deeds would be drawn out with the rest of the lumber of his evidence room, and burnt to the tune of *ga-ira*, in the courts of Bedford (then Equality) House. He was made for the frenchified faction, in every part of their double character. As robbers, he was a noble booty; as speculists, a glorious subject for their experimental philosophy. They would no more regard a Marquis of Tavistock than an Abbot of Tavistock; the Lord of Woburn would not be more respectable in their eyes than the Prior of Woburn; they would make no difference between the superior of a Covent-garden of nuns, and of a Covent-garden of another description; they would not care a rush whether his coat were long or short; the colour purple, or blue and buff; they would not examine what part of his head his hair was cut from; but would look with equal respect on a tonsure and a crop.

Although the known eloquence of the author shone in every part of this production, his characteristic blemishes were not less apparent. Amid the glowing passages in which it abounds, the fury of personal vitu-

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Answers.

peration continually offends against good taste, and the introduction and expansion of low and disgusting metaphors, reduce the reader often to the necessity of turning to other passages, to mitigate his feeling of disgust.

Beside the less considerable efforts made in newspapers, magazines, and reviews, several persons wrote answers to this pamphlet: some irritated by the reflections on themselves and their associates; some stimulated by the glorious prospect of being the personal antagonists of Burke; and some, perhaps, with the hope of acquiring the favourable notice of the peer in whose cause they drew the pen. They omitted no fact in the author's political life, spared no imputation on his conduct, principles, or motives, and recapitulated every indiscreet expression which he had printed or uttered, from his first pamphlets to the debates on the American war and the regency, to cast on him the odium of being a profligate, selfish apostate, and mere declamatory libeller. Such was the scope of all these attacks; from the cumbrous pedantry of Gilbert Wakefield, who poured on him a flood of Greek and Latin quotations, down to those minor pretenders in politics and literature, who, having no classical abuse at their command, resorted to their more ready and appropriate weapons, the tropes of Saint George's Fields, and the figures of Billingsgate and Saint Giles's*. All these writers, whose opinions could be considered of any value, concurred in a tribute of admiration to the mighty genius of the man they attempted to decry†.

Soon after the appearance of the pamphlet, the Earl of Lauderdale himself, when he made his motion respecting the four-and-a-half per cent. duties, declared that he would avoid canvassing the conduct of a particular person, whom it might have been imagined he should have adverted to, in consequence of a recent

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Notices in the
House of
Lords.

* See Gilbert Wakefield's Reply to the Letter of Edmund Burke; Letter to Henry Duncombe by William Miles; Vindication of the Duke of Bedford's Attack by Thos. Geo. Street; Sober Reflections on the seditious and inflammatory Letter of Edmund Burke, by John Thelwall; and Warm Reply by A. Macleod. To these many might be added.

† For example, see Wakefield's pamphlet, p. 5; Miles's, p. 96; and Street's, p. 65.

publication. No man could more admire that gentleman's genius, wit, and talents; although no man more sincerely regretted the manner in which they had been degraded on a late occasion. And Lord Grenville, whose former vindication Mr. Burke had most gratefully acknowledged, declared himself glad to find that the noble Earl had avoided any such allusion; had he, however, chosen to introduce that topic, he was fully prepared to vindicate what had been granted, on grounds equally honourable to Mr. Burke's character and to the conduct of administration.

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CHAPTER THE NINETY-SEVENTH.

1795—1796.

France.—State of the new government.—Parties.—Royalists.—Jacobins.—Conduct of the Directors.—Agitation of the Jacobins.—Babœuf.—Views of the government.—Prussia.—The Emperor.—His Treaty with Russia and England.—French plan of campaign.—La Vendée tranquillized.—Bonaparte commands the army of Italy.—Views of his early life.—His progress.—The times favourable to him.—His person.—Succeeds General Scherer.—State of the army.—His first address to them.—Composition of the army.—Force opposed.—Instructions to Bonaparte.—First movement of the army.—Conduct toward Genoa.—Battle of Monténotte.—Battle of Millesimo.—Battle of Dego.—Further success of the French.—State of Sardinia.—The King solicits peace.—Answer of Bonaparte.—Bonaparte's perfidious counsel.—Sardinia obtains peace.—Truce with Parma and Modena.—The bridge of Lodi.—Projects of Bonaparte.—His entry into Milan.—Plans announced to him.—Resisted.—The directors submit.—Progress of Bonaparte.—Retreat of Beaulieu.—Armistice with Naples.—Capture of Bologna and Modena.—Armistice with the Pope.—Conduct toward Venice.—Verona.—Louis the Eighteenth.—Remonstrances.—Declaration of Bonaparte.—Concession of Venice.—The French take possession of Verona.—Exactions from Venice.—Capture of Leghorn.—Siege of Mantua.—Observations on Bonaparte.—Plunder of works of art.—Bonaparte's disinterestedness.—Peculation of agents.—Campaign in Germany.—The Archduke Charles commands.—Position of the armies.—Wurmser

dispatched into Italy.—Successes of the French.—The Duke of Wurtemberg obtains an armistice.—Contributions levied.—Battle of Neresheim.—Defeat of Bernadotte.—Jourdan's retreat.—Moreau's retreat.—Effect of these events on England.—State of Corsica.—Views of Bonaparte.—Porto Ferrajo taken.—Corsica evacuated.—Porto Ferrajo also.—Naples purchases peace.—Parma.—Revolution in the States of Modena.—Formation of the Cispadane Republic.—State of Holland.—The colonies taken.—Manifesto of the Dutch.—Order in council.—Rejected by the Dutch.—Expedition to recover the Cape of Good Hope.—Compact between France and Spain.—Spanish manifesto.—Answer.—State of the French government.—Babœuf's conspiracy.—Insurrection.—Dread of Bonaparte.—Army of Italy.—Battles of Castiglione, Peschiera, and Corona.—Wurmser retires into Mantua.—Violence and cruelty of the French.—Other victories.—Battle of Arcola.—Proceedings in the West Indies.—Court-martial on Admiral Cornwallis.—Promotion of Colonel Moore.—Capture of St. Lucie.—Re-capture of St. Vincent's.—Grenada.—St. Domingo.—Attack on Newfoundland.—Naval engagements.—Capture of Sir Sidney Smith.—His treatment.—Feeling of the French government.—Negotiation with the Emperor.—Lord Malmesbury goes to Paris.

IN France, the authority of the executive Directory was exercised amidst the uncertainties of newly acquired power; beset with the difficulties arising out of discordant principles and factious discontents; capable of stability only from the effect of military success. The two parties from which they had most opposition to expect were in themselves too adverse to make an united effort: the royalists, who, in spite of misfortune and persecution, maintained their duty to their sovereign, and the furious Jacobins, who could relish no system of government but that which had enabled them to revel in crime, and glory in demolition and murder. Each of these parties was equally dissatisfied

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directors.Agitation of
the Jacobins.

with the new constitution: the royalists could not forget that the assembly by which it had been formed began its career amid the massacres of September; and the others, that the existing constitution was sanctioned under the sound of the artillery by which Paris was overawed, and their faction subdued. That the executive directory consisted entirely of regicides, could not, of course, recommend them to the royalists: the form of their appointment and the nature of their office, so like royalty, was in itself repugnant and odious to the Jacobins. The offences of the insurrection had been absolved by an act of amnesty soon after the establishment of the new government; and those who remained in prison were discharged. They were not altered by their captivity or conciliated by their enlargement. They considered their liberty, as one of them states it, to be due, not to the triumph of the popular cause, but to the mean policy of their enemies; and menaced in their hearts the tyrants who had just loosed their chains*. The conduct of the directors was not calculated to allay these feelings, or to belie the prepossessions from which they arose. Some portions of the pomp and state of royalty speedily followed the possession of supreme authority. The palace of the Luxembourg, formerly the residence of Monsieur, the King's brother; during the reign of terror a house of detention, filled with numerous prisoners of the higher orders; was now the habitation of the newly installed heads of the republic; and their love of pomp was displayed in costly dresses for themselves, and in a numerous guard splendidly appointed. They affected regal state, had attendants of ceremony, gave audiences, and received their own and foreign ministers with the ceremony of established courts. These indications of departure from the system of liberty and equality gave great offence; and the republicans, however divided in many respects, united in their complaints on this state of things, and formed ominous assemblages in coffee-houses and public walks,

* Buonarotti's History of Babeuf's Conspiracy, page 54.

as well as in places where they were less open to observation. They attempted to re-open the hall of the Jacobins; but that being refused, they were permitted to hold meetings in the Pantheon, or church of St. Geneviève: but when their proceedings at that place grew too violent for endurance, and they were expelled by a military force, headed by Bonaparte, who had been appointed general of the army of the interior, they found an asylum in some old and shattered buildings in the faubourg St. Marceau. Their principal leader was Babœuf, who denoted his principles by assuming the name of Gracchus; and, in his speeches and publications, denounced the government to hatred, and recommended an agrarian law. He extolled the virtues and the views of Robespierre, whose patriotic intentions had been frustrated because he had not ventured to pronounce the words "agrarian law." A few rich men had been despoiled; but the sans-culottes had not been benefited. Aristocracy was in riches; and if they were to be possessed, it signified little whether they were in the hands of a Villeroi or a Laborde, or in those of a Danton, a Barras, or a Rewbell*.

Babœuf.

Amidst all the changes of her government, the struggles of faction, the distress of her finance, and her reverses in war, France always adhered tenaciously to a maxim bequeathed to the nation by Richelieu, that nature had assigned to her as a natural boundary the banks of the Rhine. The decree by which all notions of conquest were renounced, was contemned, as opposed to this principle: to its accomplishment, all efforts in the field, all conquests and annexations, were directed; and in all treaties or proposals for peace, it was undeviatingly maintained. By conquest, they had acquired Liege and the Austrian Low Countries; and the treaty of Basle gave them those portions of territory on the left bank of the Rhine which had formed part of the dominions of Prussia. Distaste to the war, views on Poland, jealousy, and dissatisfaction against the Emperor, united in swaying Frederick

Views of the
government.

Prussia.

* An account and a good description of Babœuf, as a plebeian beau, is given by La Vallée, *Histoire des Factions*, tome iii. page 37.

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William to make this cession; but he was also strongly impelled, by the promise of France, to secularize and transfer to his dominion some of the ecclesiastical states in Germany; a proposal extraordinarily advantageous to him; as he would acquire possessions near to his own dominions, and ready to conform to his laws, instead of provinces, distant, profitless, and maintaining governments and privileges of their own; and, in addition, would have the gratification of substituting the Protestant for the Romish religion in the secularized states. A peace, concluded with such short-sighted policy, such selfish views, and in such entire disregard of the general interest, deprived the King of his proper self-esteem, and tarnished the brightness of that glory which raised Prussia so high in the rank of European nations; and when that kingdom was doomed, ten years afterward, to experience loss, insult, and degradation, it could be attributed only to her perseverance in that false and impolitic system which dictated the treaty of Basle. How little respect it gained him from the French was shewn when, speedily after it was concluded, the line of demarcation and neutrality, which formed one of its most material stipulations, was violated in the little territory of Berg, where, under General Lefèvre, a French force passed, in contempt of a Prussian officer, who, not having strength to repel aggression, found his representations evaded and his remonstrances treated with disdain*.

The Emperor.

Dissatisfaction, amounting almost to animosity, prevailed between Austria and Prussia: complaints were urged with heat and vehemence on both sides; but, excited to immediate exertion by the wrongs he complained of, the Emperor assumed a conduct distinguished by a spirit of firmness and magnanimity. He concluded a triple alliance with Russia and Great Britain; and the negotiation was conducted by the ministers of each nation with a secrecy which prevented the disclosure of its general intent or particular stipu-

September 28.
His treaty
with Russia
and England.

* *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii pp. 151, 227.

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lations. It was divided into three compacts; one between the courts of Vienna and London; the second between Austria and Great Britain; and the third between Austria and Russia: the Empress, at last, engaging to aid her allies with all her forces by sea and land*. Beside the general directions for the prosecution of the war, resentment of the conduct of Prussia was shewn by an order to the Austrian commanders to act, as circumstances might direct, according to their own judgment; to pass the line of demarcation, if they found it advantageous to their operations, paying no respect to a neutrality which appeared to be contrived only for their injury.

For the approaching campaign, the French had formed a plan of vast extent, combining the offensive operations of the three great armies in one system, and all tending to the same point. That of the Sambre and Meuse, under Jourdan, was to keep its right wing bearing on the Rhine, while its left should advance into Germany, regulating its progress by that of the Rhine, commanded by Moreau. Of this army, the centre and right were to penetrate into Suabia, and advance by the lake of Constance to the mountains of the Tyrol, guided in their proceeding by the anticipated success of the army of Italy, which, descending from the Appenines above Savona, was to invade the plains of Lombardy: thus the three great armies of the Republic might, at the same time, by the effect of combined movements, have found themselves at the gates of Vienna, without foregoing their communications with France.

French plan of
campaign.

For this grand plan, the Directory were indebted, not to their colleague Carnot alone, but to General Clarke, who had been called to their aid; and much of the political arrangement, by which the success of their arms might be strengthened and rendered effective, was undoubtedly suggested by Talleyrand, whose name had been erased from the list of emigrants, himself permitted to return and

1795.
Sept. 5.

* *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. page 193.

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La Vendée
tranquillized.

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Bonaparte
commands the
army of Italy.

assist them with his knowledge, sagacity, and talent for intrigue. An insurrection in La Vendée and the neighbouring country had been suppressed by the vigour and severity of General Hoche, who captured the two royalist Generals, Charrette and Stofflet, and put them both to death*.

Ample reinforcements were sent to the armies, and particularly that of Italy, where, from obvious indications, it appeared that the Emperor intended to make his principal effort. The command of this army was confided to a general already mentioned, as assisting in the siege of Toulon, and in the repression of the recent tumults in Paris, whose acts, both in the field and in council, fixed the attention and regulated the destinies of Europe for the term of twenty years, whose exploits, during a similar period, have never been paralleled, and whose name can never be forgotten while the records of history shall remain; to Napoléon Bonaparte†.

* *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 292 to 295.

† Much discussion has taken place and much unwarranted heat has been displayed concerning the orthography of this name, that is, whether the first syllable ought to be Buo, or only Bo. His brother Louis expresses great anger against Sir Walter Scott, for having obstinately written the name Buo, and not Bo; the latter orthography, he says, having been consecrated by an ancient usage of the family; it must have been done to give an appearance of foreignness to Napoléon and separate his glory from that of France. (*Réponse à Sir Walter Scott*, p. 6). Some other writers, with less warmth, entered into the same views and took great pains to prove that the latter is the correct orthography. Were the point of any importance, I should say that the Italian orthography, both from reason and ancient usage in the family, ought to be preferred. I have before me "*La Vedova Comedia facetissima*, di M. Nicolo Buonaparte, cittadino fiorentino," printed in 1568, two centuries before Napoléon was born; a proof that such was the acknowledged name at that period; but the compiler of a collection called "*Cœuvres de Napoléon*," while he pretty generally excludes the u, says, "that in the genealogical documents which have been communicated to him, the name is written sometimes one way, sometimes the other, although the text was, always, Italian. (*Cœuvres de Napoléon*, tome i. p. 1.) Monthonlon (*Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 9,) makes the same observation, and *Les Cases*, (*Journal*, vol. i. p. 96) repeats it, with the addition, that "Napoléon's father always introduced the u; and his uncle, the Archdeacon Lucien (who survived Napoléon's father, and was a parent to Napoléon and his brothers), at the same time, and under the same roof, wrote it Bonaparte. During his youth, Napoléon followed the example of his father. On attaining the command of the army of Italy, he took good care not to alter the orthography which agreed with the spirit of the Italian language; but, at a later period, and when intirely amongst the French, he wished to adopt their orthography, and thenceforth wrote his name Bonaparte." In the latter assertion this author is hardly correct; Napoléon, in all his public dispatches, during the early period of his career, signed à l'Italienne; but, from the time of his departure for Egypt, invariably used the other orthography. See also *A Voice from Saint Helena*, by Barry O'Meara, vol. ii. p. 93. Such were his public dispatches; but, in communications less important, he was

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View of his
early life.

This extraordinary personage was in his twenty-seventh year, having been born on the 15th of August, 1769, at Ajaccio, in Corsica, where his family had long been established. It has been attempted, by those who wished to conciliate, or have endeavoured to flatter Napoléon, to shew that his family contained in its members noble or even royal personages; but when such assertions were tendered to him, he treated them as trifling, or resented them as indignities*. When very young, he commenced his education at the Royal Military School at Brienne, where he shewed great indifference to classical literature, but made rapid and solid progress in mathematics. At an earlier period than the course of regular education would have allowed, he was transferred to the general school in Paris, and, at the age of seventeen, obtained a commission as second lieutenant of artillery, and was placed in garrison at Valence. In this situation, his education received a finish which greatly influenced his future life, and laid the basis of many of those acquirements which afterwards occasioned much astonishment†;

less observant. I have seen, in the possession of Mr. Sainsbury, of Red Lion Square, two letters written by him to General Calon, chef de la troisième division de l'armée de l'intérieur, on the same day (11 Nivose, an 4—31 Dec. 1795), in the first of which he spells his name with, in the latter, written at nine o'clock in the same evening, without the u. Too much, perhaps, has been said on this unimportant subject; I shall only add, that, as a contrary course might give unnecessary offence to some one person in the world, I shall continue to spell the name as above.

* On this subject, a remarkable instance is recorded: "At the interview at Dresden, before the Russian campaign" (in 1812), Las Cases says (vol. i. pt. 1. p. 97)—"the Emperor Francis, one day, told Napoléon, then his son-in-law, that his family had governed as sovereigns at Treviso: a fact of which there could be no doubt, as Francis had caused all the documents proving it to be drawn up and presented to him. Napoléon replied, with a smile, that he did not know any thing about it, and that he preferred being Rodolph of the Hapsburgh of his own family."

† The anecdote, as related, is sufficiently curious to merit a detailed extract. On the seventh of October, 1808, when he was at Erfurt, with the Emperor of Russia and other great sovereigns, the conversation happened to turn on the Golden Bull, which, until the confederation of the Rhine, regulated the election of Emperors of Germany, and the Prussian primate fixed its date in 1409. Napoléon corrected him, making it 1356. The Emperor of Austria expressing some surprise at this great exactness, Bonaparte said: "Sire, when I was a second lieutenant of artillery"—Some surprise was exhibited by his royal auditors, but he proceeded: "Sire, when I had the honour to be a second lieutenant of artillery, I was three years in garrison at Valence. I was not fond of society, and lived greatly retired. By a happy chance, my abode was next that of a learned and most obliging bookseller. In these three years I read his whole collection over and over again, not confining myself to matters

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by a judicious application of those hours, which others, if they did not employ them in worse pursuits, wasted at the fish-pond, the billiard-table, or the tennis-court, this extraordinary individual so qualified himself, that, when he had to fulfil the duties of a negotiator or legislator, he was able to astonish, to instruct, and to master all with whom he came in contact.

His progress.

After the recapture of Toulon, to which he so materially contributed*, it had been intended to employ him in the diplomatic department at Genoa; but the mission did not take effect: he was cashiered, restored, again cashiered, imprisoned, released, and left in obscurity and neglect. He next served under Dugommier, who estimated him highly and justly, in the Alps; he was pursued by the sanguinary jealousy of the Jacobin government; saved from its fangs by the friendship of the younger Robespierre; received a nominal appointment of commandant of artillery in Holland, but, not being actively employed, passed his time in privacy and poverty in Paris, until Barras called him to his assistance during the insurrection of the sections. From this time he advanced in favour and in fame; he married an amiable and accomplished lady, Madame Josephine Beauharnois, widow of the general who had fallen under the guillotine†, was promoted to the rank of general, and appointed first to command the army of the interior, afterward that of Italy‡.

The times favourable to Bonaparte.

A man of talent and ambition could not have desired a time and a scene more favourable to his views than was thus opened to Bonaparte. The Revolution, as it has justly been observed, had produced no great men. Great events had occurred; great attacks had been repelled, and great dangers avoided; but, neither in the

* relating entirely to my own profession; and I forgot nothing; for I am endowed "with a very retentive memory, particularly in figures."—*Mémoires de Constant, sur le Vie privée de Napoléon*, tome iv. p. 85.

† Vol. v. pp. 483—484.

† Vol. v. p. 624.

‡ These particulars are derived from all the histories of the time, and the numerous biographical works on Napoléon: it would be tedious to cite them, because they agree in all material facts, and vary only in those points where the position of each writer afforded some peculiar means of observation or formation.

senate or the field, had any individual appeared who could justly lay claim to a proud and eminent distinction. From the towering, but unstable, Mirabeau, down to the lowest of the numerous reptiles who had shewn at the same time their venom and their meanness; the feeble Brissot, with his phrase-making adherents; the vehement Danton, with his blood-thirsty, ravenous followers; the crafty, timid, and sanguinary Robespierre; all had appeared with momentary gleams, which led to the formation of high expectations; but want of clear and definite views, of powers of combination, of personal courage, or vigilant prudence, left them all failing in the times of active crisis, and they perished, without leaving any reputation approaching to greatness. In arms, the French had achieved prodigious exploits; the valour of the troops was generally guided by men of bravery and skill; but not one had yet appeared, who, while he conciliated their affections, could command the respect of mankind. The feeble, presumptuous, treacherous La Fayette; Dumouriez, brave and active in the field, but so involved in the variety of his views, and so shallow in his designs, that a vulgar demagogue could, with impunity, brave and insult him in the capital he had saved; Pichegru, of undoubted valour and conduct, but devoted to an intrigue so ill concealed that his enemies could, without injustice, hold him up to distrust as a traitor to the government by which he was employed; and without particularizing others, suffice it to name Hoche, who, full of bravery, not deficient in military conduct, nor suspected of any latent views, was the victim of his personal vices and ill-regulated desires, and hastening to the grave by courses which deprived him of all claims to respect; all these left a chasm, which Bonaparte was destined to fill. The favourable reports of Dugommier led his troops to form great expectations; and, as he afterward expressed it, when he arrived at the army, it seemed as if the officers had scarcely eyes enough to gaze at him*.

* Las Cases, vol. i. part 1. p. 150.

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His person.March
21.Succeeds Ge-
neral Scherer.

March 28.

State of the
army
20th.His first
address to
them.

In person, the new general did not possess every advantage calculated to impart a high opinion: he was of small height, and his extraordinary leanness had the appearance of inveterate disease, or incurable infirmity; but his breadth of chest and evident strength of muscle denoted a good constitution; while the commanding power of his eye, and the expression of his features shewed him alike able to command or to persuade. He had been married only three days when he quitted Paris to join the army.

General Scherer, his predecessor in command, had occasioned much animadversion by his inaction during the winter, and by a supposed general feebleness in his conduct, which had prevented the receiving of supplies, and encouraged a spirit of insubordination. Bonaparte might easily have acquired some portion of popularity by vilifying the man he was sent to supersede; but, on the contrary, he declared that he had entitled himself to his gratitude by the kindness of his reception, his sincerity, and readiness to afford useful information*. When Bonaparte assumed the command at Nice, he found much to occasion anxiety; but he could not harbour a desponding feeling. The troops, worn down by famine, and irritated by neglect, were thinned by desertion, and not without symptoms of mutiny; one battalion refused to march from Nice, alleging that they had no shoes, and had not received their arrears of pay. The general quelled this discord by prompt and vigorous measures, unattended with any military execution. He acknowledged the justice of their complaints; and observed that the four departments, on which the duty was imposed, had neither paid the forced loan, nor sent in the contributions of grain, horses, and forage required by the law; the administrative state of the army was calculated to inspire anxiety, but not despair†.

Of one thing he was assured, that neither an indifference to the cause of their country, nor a fear of meet-

* Œuvres, tome i. p. 2.

† Lettre de Bonaparte au Directoire executif, du 28 Mars, 1796. Œuvres, tome i. p. 1.

ing its adversaries, formed any part of their motives; and this opinion he turned to the utmost advantage in his first address to them. "Soldiers," he said, "you are naked; badly fed; the government is deeply in your debt, and has no means of paying you. The patience and courage you have displayed amidst these mountains are admirable; but they produce to you no glory, reflect on you no splendour. I will lead you into the most fertile plains in the world; rich provinces and great cities shall be in your power; there you will find honour, fame, and wealth. Soldiers of Italy, will you be deficient in courage and constancy?" This well-timed harangue, delivered with every appearance of frankness and internal conviction, electrified the army, and produced the intended conviction and confidence; even old officers, such as La Harpe, Augereau, and Massena, were forced to acknowledge, although not without feelings of envy and self-reproach, the extraordinary ascendancy of their juvenile leader*.

Napoléon's army consisted of between fifty and sixty thousand men, ill provided with cavalry; but for the service in which they were first to be engaged, amid mountain passes, gorges and defiles, this defect would not be so much felt as in other situations. The soldiers were well seasoned to the service, many of them having long been employed in the most proud and glorious operations of the war: they were the men who had recaptured Toulon, and had fought all the subsequent battles in the Alps. Another portion, which had been engaged in the Pyrenees, on the conclusion of the peace with Spain, had, as General Tarleton judiciously anticipated, not been melted down into the mass of the people, but sent to augment the army of Italy.

Composition of
the army.

To oppose this force, General Beaulieu, the Austrian commander, had numerically a greater, but, in reality, a much inferior, force. He was supplied by the Aulic Council at Vienna with twenty-eight thou-

Force
opposed.

* Lacrételle, tome xiii. p. 451.—*Homme d'Etat*, tom. xiii. p. 306; the speech is recorded in many other works.

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sand men, and, on his arrival at the foot of the Alps, he found, to his great mortification, that the Piedmontese army, instead of reaching the number he had been taught to expect, hardly exceeded forty thousand, militia included; of these, not more than twenty thousand were in line for active operations; the rest were shut up in garrisons, or defending the passes of the mountains. They were not under the command of Beaulieu, but of General Colli; and thus, with a mutilated army, a jealous co-operator, ruled by timid and uncertain governments, Beaulieu had to contend against the sublime genius and commanding mind of an opponent whose greatness became every day more and more apparent*.

Instructions
to Bonaparte.
March 6.

When the directors had received and approved Bonaparte's plan of the campaign, they gave him instructions for accomplishing its objects, with limitations to his authority, which demonstrated how little they were able to appreciate the man whom they pretended to instruct and to govern. He was first to beat the Austrians, separate them from the Piedmontese, and drive the King of Sardinia into a forced alliance with France. He was to use all means to inflame discontents in Piedmont, and to cause general or local insurrections against the government; thus would they intimidate all Italy, and dissolve the coalition of its petty princes in favour of the Austrian cause. Disregarding the neutrality of the republic of Genoa, he was to take possession of the fort of Savona, and compel the Genoese to supply him with money, and deliver up the fortress of Gavi; or, on their non-compliance, to take it by storm. But with these achievements, his discretionary power was to end: they reserved to themselves the power of concluding peace, and forbade him to make any truce, or accede to a suspension of arms†. The directions with respect to Genoa were entirely disapproved of by Bonaparte; but he obeyed them; and

* *Homme d'Etat*, tome xiii. p. 304. I have followed this work, as probably the most impartial. Napoléon himself (*Montholon*, vol. i. p. 2) states the Austro-Sardinian army at 80,000 fighting men, with two hundred pieces of cannon, while his own force did not exceed 31,000, with thirty pieces of horse-artillery.

† Same, p. 302.

omitted nothing, by supplying the wants of his army, to restore discipline, without which, as he justly observed, there could be no hope of victory*.

After reviewing and addressing his troops, Bonaparte proceeded to vigorous and decided action. Massena and Augereau took up positions at Loano, Finale, and Savona; Serrurier at Garessio; while La Harpe, menacing Genoa, proceeded to Voltri. Napoléon, sensible of the difficulties which would beset him in the attempt to pursue the course hitherto followed by all commanders in ancient and modern history, who had led invasions to the opposite side of the Alps, did not attempt to cross those formidable barriers, but sought a passage through the Genoese territory, by the defiles of the Bochetta and of Savona, between the gorges of Saint Jacques and Cadibone. To facilitate his operations, the French minister at Genoa imperiously demanded from the senate the passage of the army through La Bochetta, and the keys of the fortress of Gavi, unreservedly declaring that the French meant thus to penetrate into Lombardy, and to base their operations upon Genoa itself. The intelligence of this demand spread astonishment and consternation in all parts of Italy, and the senate of Genoa were not so solicitous to protect their territory against invasion, as to prevent insurrections among the lower classes, who, having been imbued with French principles, and seduced by French emissaries, were devoted to their cause, while the superior orders were equally opposed to them.

Beaulieu received information of the intended movement of the enemy, accompanied with an intimation that if he wished to secure the important post of Montenotte, which the French general had neglected, he must effect it before the expiration of nine days, at which period it would be reinforced. Beaulieu hastened to avail himself of this information; but D'Argenteau, to whose misconduct former failures had been justly attributed, and who was now retained by the

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April 6.
First movement of the army.

Conduct
toward Genoa.

31st.
Battle of
Montenotte.

* Letter to the Executive Directory, Œuvres, tome i. p. 7.

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April 10, 11.

Battle of
Millesimo.

14th.

15th.
Battle of De-
go.

Aulic Council as second in command, in violation of the promises they had made to the veteran leader, either through defective judgment or treachery, neglected the instructions imparted to him, and did not advance his troops to Montenotte until four days after the appointed time. It is mentioned as a great error of the Austrian general, that he too much extended his line, and weakened his centre; other faults are mentioned, and some suspicions assigned to account for the ill-fate of the imperialists in the battle of Montenotte, which began the campaign, and in which the French were completely victorious. Without describing the particulars of the conflicts, or dwelling on acts of individual heroism, it may suffice to say, that Bonaparte in person led to the attack the divisions of Augereau and Massena; that the Austrian division, under d'Argenteau, surrounded on all sides, made a precipitate retreat, which soon became a flight, and, by a circuitous route, gained an isolated position at Perretto, three leagues beyond Dego, the key of the Austrian line of operations, leaving open to the French a free passage into Italy. Bonaparte effected the plan of dividing the armies of Austria and Sardinia, by another engagement, the result of profoundly skilful dispositions, which was fought three days afterward at Millesimo. The victory gained by the French General was in every respect of the highest importance; the slaughter greatly thinned the ranks of his opponents; the territory he gained facilitated his junction with those by whom he was to be reinforced; he took immense quantities of ammunition, provisions and stores, besides about forty pieces of cannon. This loss, which it would be very difficult for the allies to repair, converted the penury of the French, both in arms and necessaries, into plenty and affluence.

Making a brave and not injudicious, though unsuccessful, effort to retrieve some portion of their losses, seven thousand picked men of the Austrian army, under General Wuckapovick, attacked the French in the village of Dego, and at first threw them into disorder; but succours speedily arrived, the whole army was put

in motion, and, after a sanguinary conflict, the Austrians, having lost half their force, were obliged to retreat toward Tortona, by the roads of Acqui and Gavi*. Pursuing exactly the course suggested by his first instructions, Bonaparte captured the intrenched camp at Ceva, gained the battle of Mondovi; and Massena took the town of Cherasco, an important post, yielding an immense booty. The Austrian and Sardinian forces were now effectually separated, and the French menaced a speedy attack on Turin.

Revolutionary means to forward the views of France had not been neglected. There was in the Sardinian capital a large party, who, adopting the modern system of judging, thought they best displayed their patriotism by resisting the government of their country, and provided most effectually for their own independence and happiness by furthering the projects of the enemy. Victor Amadeus was not endowed with talents adequate to the situation in which he was placed; and his efforts, if not always unwise, were unfortunate. He endeavoured to imitate the French by commanding a levy en masse of all his unmarried subjects above the age of sixteen; but his edict produced more rebels than soldiers. Fearful of being besieged in his own capital, the fortifications of which he did not sufficiently estimate, and justly mistrustful of the loyalty of his subjects, he threw himself on the mercy of his conqueror, and solicited a suspension of arms, preparatory to a treaty of peace.

Although this was one of the results most desired in the campaign, Bonaparte received the proposition with loftiness and an appearance of indifference. His answer to General Colli was, "The executive Directory has reserved to itself the power of treating for peace; the King, your master's plenipotentiary, must therefore go to Paris, or await, at Genoa, the plenipoten-

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Further suc-
cesses of the
French.
17th.

State of
Sardinia.

The King
solicits peace.

24th.
Answer of
Bonaparte.

* Bonaparte, in his dispatch to the Directory, asserted that Beaulieu himself led this attack; but a writer of undoubted information says that the Austrian General was far distant, and observes that this groundless assertion, which would be unaccountable in ordinary periods, is easily explained in a time of revolution; adding, that it was of importance to Bonaparte, in the commencement of his career, to fascinate the minds of men by extraordinary statements.— *Homme d'Etat*, tom. iii. p. 313.

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“tiaries which may be sent by the French government.
 “The military and moral position of the two armies
 “renders a pure and simple suspension of arms im-
 “possible. I am convinced that my government will
 “grant you honourable conditions ; but I cannot in-
 “terrupt my march on mere vague presumptions.
 “To attain your end and spare any useless, and there-
 “fore unwarrantable, effusion of blood, you must put
 “me in possession, at your own choice, of two of the
 “fortresses, Coni, Alessandria, or Tortona ; and then,
 “without pursuing hostilities, we may await the con-
 “clusion of negotiations.”

28th.
 Bonaparte's
 perfidious
 counsel.
 28, 29.

Coni and Alessandria were readily surrendered ; and Bonaparte explained to the directors that, having possession of these fortresses, together with Ceva and other posts in Piedmont, they might either grant or refuse peace. If they determined to continue hostilities, he would keep possession of the ceded fortresses, and march upon Turin ; but if they resolved to dethrone the King, he requested that they would keep him in play for a few decades, to make operations the more certain. An immediate revolution in Piedmont was not to be expected : time would produce it ; but the minds of the people were not yet ripe for such an event ; and, even if they desired it, they were not to expect that the expense of effecting it would be borne by France. Should the Directory think peace desirable, they might peremptorily dictate the terms. Such was the position in which, in less than a month after commencing his first campaign, this young general had placed his country*.

Sardinia
 obtains peace.

The King of Sardinia, having acquiesced in all the terms required of him, obtained an armistice, which was succeeded by a treaty of peace ; and, beside the towns and fortresses already mentioned, the French remained masters of all the country on the right bank of the Tanaro, with permission to cross the Po beyond Valenza, and a free passage through the King's dominions. Beaulieu found it necessary, for

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. pp. 13 to 17.

the protection of the Milanese, to take a position between the Po and the rivers Tercino and Terdoppio. Alarmed at this event, the Dukes of Parma and Modena purchased a truce at a large price, in money, horses, oxen, and provisions.

The French had already passed the Po; and their advanced guard was, in the front of the Austrian rear, posted in front of Lodi. The bridge, which it was thought necessary to cross, was judiciously enfiladed by cannon, and it was not expected that a passage could be effected by force; but the persevering bravery of the French, encouraged by the exhortations and the example of their commander, surmounted every obstacle; and at the expense, it is said, of four thousand lives, the point was gained. This conquest, if dearly bought, was, in the eyes of Bonaparte, highly to be valued. "It gives the republic," he said, in a confidential letter to Carnot*, "the whole of Lombardy. In your calculations, you may proceed as if I were already in possession of Milan. I shall not go there to-morrow, because I mean to pursue Beaulieu, and avail myself of his insanity to beat him once more. It is possible that I may soon attack Mantua; and if I carry that place, nothing can prevent me from penetrating into Bavaria: in two decades I may be in the heart of Germany. Could not you combine my motions with the operations of the other two armies? I suppose there is already fighting on the Rhine: were the armistice to continue, the army of Italy would be crushed." He desired such information as would guide him in the determination to enter the Tyrol, or limit himself to the Adige; and he observed how worthy of the republic it would be to sign a treaty of peace when their three armies were united in the heart of Bavaria, or of the astonished Austria; adding, that if a forward movement of the two armies of the Rhine were determined on, he would pass the Tyrol before the Emperor could seriously entertain a suspicion of his design.

In some particulars, these anticipations and reso-

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May 9.
Truce with
Parma and
Modena.
7, 10.
The bridge of
Lodi.

11.
Projects of
Bonaparte.

The Directory
jealous of him.

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. page 38; Homme d'Etat, tome iii. page 317.

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7. lutions were in perfect conformity with the views of the Directory, recently communicated to him by Carnot; but his growing greatness already began to excite suspicion, and the fears of a government, which, owing its origin to accident, could not, without alarm, observe the progress of a man who, uniting in himself the high qualities of bravery, prudence, and sagacity, had acquired the confidence and love of the army, the admiration of the officers who served with him, the applause of all France, and had in so short a period rendered himself the wonder of the whole civilized world. They were anxious to deprive him, by indirect means, of the command of the army of Italy; a project which his rapidly growing successes rendered at once more desirable and more difficult.

His entry into
Milan.

Borne on the wing of conquest, Bonaparte easily captured Pizzighitone; and, having sent Massena before him to receive the submission of Milan, entered that city, the capital of Lombardy, in the triumphal style of a conqueror; took up his abode in the palace of the Archduke, dismissed the government formed by that prince, and established one of his own, composed entirely of devoted partizans of France. While he thus made himself uncontrolled master of Lombardy, the Directory was proceeding in the project of placing his troops under the command of Kellerman, while he should be sent on an expedition against Rome and Naples.

18.
Plans an-
nounced to
him.

They explained their project in these terms. He was to command the army which was to secure the possession of all Italy; Kellerman, that in the Milanese. To Bonaparte were reserved the columns destined to chastise the English at Leghorn, make London tremble, and decide the fate of Corsica; by the immediate execution of this plan, which the Directory said they considered more important than a dangerous expedition to the Tyrol, he would shake the tiara of the pretended head of the church, and impose on the King of Naples conditions of peace no less advantageous to France than disastrous to the perfidious English.

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Resisted.

As the first means of averting this calamitous arrangement, Bonaparte speedily sent to Paris his aide-camp, Murat, who, jointly with Josephine, used their best persuasions with Carnot, and with Barras, whose rigour was subdued by the douceur of a million (£42,000). In his official and confidential letters he shewed a loftiness and firmness of mind sufficient to confirm the fears, while it quelled the spirit, of those who thought to depress him. "To join Kellerman with me in Italy," he said, "is to ruin every thing: I cannot willingly serve with a man who thinks himself the first general in Europe; and, besides, I think that one bad general is better than two good ones. I have made the campaign," he said in another dispatch, "without consulting any one; nor could I have effected any thing, had I been obliged to conform to another man's views. If you impose restrictions on me, and oblige me to regulate my steps by directions from commissioners of government; if they are to change my movements, diminish or augment my forces, expect no good results; if you weaken your means by separating your troops; if you break up the unity of military conception, with grief I tell you that you will have lost the fairest opportunity of making all Italy bend to your laws; your conduct will have more influence on the affairs of the campaign than if the Emperor were to send to Beaulieu a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men." These modes of persuasion, and perhaps the still greater influence of fear of the people, should they give umbrage to the favourite general, induced the Directory to adopt his views; and Carnot announced, in submissive terms, their entire acquiescence. Kellerman was to remain at Chambéry; and Bonaparte, at his own discretion, to adjourn or prosecute his expedition against Leghorn, Rome, and Naples: the military operations against Germany and Mantua would be dependent on his success against Beaulieu; and, sensible of the difficulty of sending directions from Paris, the government gave him the greatest latitude of ac-

The directors
submit.

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Progress of
Bonaparte.Armistice with
Naples.
4.

7th.

19.
Capture of
Bologna,
and Modena.
23rd.
Armistice with
the Pope.Conduct
toward Venice.

May 29.

tion; thus reducing their commissioners, Salicetti and Garreau, to mere cyphers*.

Following now the bent of his own genius, Bonaparte proceeded from conquest to conquest, sometimes unopposed, sometimes wresting a victory from the hands of brave antagonists, but always successful.

Alarmed at impending danger, the King of Naples and the Pope solicited peace. The King of Naples obtained an armistice, for reasons and with views of policy which Bonaparte explained, without reserve, to the Directory. "By the armistice," he says, "we obtain these results. We deprive the Austrians of two thousand four hundred cavalry; we deprive the English of five men of war and several frigates; and we cast additional disfavour on coalitions. If you make peace with Naples, you will have weakened Austria; if you do not, I shall have it in my power to make prisoners of all those cavalry; and the step taken by Naples will displease the coalition." It would not be worth while, he observed, to march twenty-five days in July and August, to meet sickness or death, while the Austrian army in the Tyrol, refreshed by repose and augmented by reinforcements, might regain in the autumn all they had lost in the spring. By means of this armistice, they would be enabled to dictate terms to the Pope, who was issuing a bull against those in France who, under pretence of religion, were preaching up civil war†. He intimated also his intention to attack Bologna in ten days or a fortnight; and within that time he was in possession of that rich and beautiful city, as well as of Modena; and the Pope was permitted to purchase an armistice at the price of twenty-one millions (£875,000) in money, beside other great and valuable sacrifices. He next pursued his project against Venice, displaying throughout consummate duplicity and perfidy. When in pursuit of Beaulieu, who had retreated beyond the

* Chiefly from *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. pp. 348 to 353, and *Œuvres de Napoléon*, tome i. pp. 30, 52.

† *Œuvres de Napoléon*, tome i. page 48.

Mincio, he represented to the senate that his army had braved the most difficult obstacles to deliver the fairest portion of Europe from the iron yoke of proud Austria. Victory, going hand in hand with justice, had crowned their efforts; but to reach the Austrian general in his present position, the French army must cross over the neutral territory of Venice, but would never forget the long amity that bound the two republics to each other. Religion, government, and customs, should be respected, and every thing supplied to his troops regularly paid for in money.

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Beaulieu had taken possession of Peschiera, a town which might have been strongly fortified, but had been neglected. The French, unmindful of their own conduct in violating the neutral territory, and occupying Brescia, Crema, and Bergamo, treated this as a treacherous proceeding on the part of Venice, and prepared to exact vengeance. Their army took possession of Pavia, and then, crossing the Mincio, defeated the Austrians, after a severely contested action at Borghetta, and so became masters of Peschiera.

29th.

They then proceeded to Verona, threatening to burn it to the ground, to avenge the French blood which had been shed at Borghetta. Their transactions at this defenceless place conferred on them no honour, although the conduct of the republic of Venice was, in one respect, disgraceful. Louis the Eighteenth had, for some time, found a refuge at Verona; but the French pretended that he was contriving plots against their country; the senate replied, that their affording this asylum to misfortune had met the sanction of the Committee of Public Safety even in the days of Robespierre; and that, Louis being a Venetian noble, they took pride in affording him the due protection. Bonaparte indignantly answered, that, by giving shelter to the pretender to the Crown of France, Venice had declared herself the enemy of the republic; and he announced a strong inclination to burn Verona, for having dared to consider herself the capital of the French empire. As the republican army approached, the senate abated their resolution, and the podesta

Verona.

Louis the
Eighteenth.

Remon-
strances.

Declaration of
Bonaparte.

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Concession of
Venice.The French
take posses-
sion of Verona.
June 3.11th.
Exactions
from Venice.

announced to the King the altered intentions of his government. Louis, with becoming spirit, desired that his name might be erased from the record of nobility, the golden book, and that a sword which Henry the Fourth had presented to them should be returned. The first request was readily granted: to the second they alleged, that, their ancestors having advanced eleven millions (£458,000) to the French monarch, they had a right to retain the sword as a deposit; an answer, a French author observes*, very fit for a pawnbroker, but extremely indecent in such high personages. Soon was their power to abuse authority terminated; Massena first, and, after him, Bonaparte, entered the town; both were received with prostrate submission, and Verona ceased to be independent. Bonaparte acknowledged that the complaints advanced against the government of Venice were utterly unfounded. "The truth of the affair of "Peschiera," he said, "is, that Beaulieu deceived them; he required a passage for fifty men, and then took possession of the town. If your aim is to draw five or six millions from Venice, I have nursed up this kind of rupture on purpose for you. You may require of them indemnities for the battle of Borghetto; if you have more decided intentions, I think you had better keep up this subject of discord; instruct me what you mean to do, and await the favourable moment of which I will avail myself, according to circumstances; for we must not have all the world upon our hands at once†." The Directory, who, a month before, had told him that Venice might be treated as a neutral, but not as a friendly, power, now answered that there could be no inconvenience in acting toward her with firmness. This principle was displayed in the exaction of a loan of twelve millions (£500,000), to be secured on the debt contracted by Holland; and the sum was to be carried to the account

* Dictionnaire des Batailles, tome iv. p. 200.

† Letter to the Directory, 7th June, 1796. Œuvres de Bonaparte, tome i. p. 50.

of money deposited by the King and government of England in the Venetian treasury.

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Unable to contend against an army superior to him in numbers, and flushed with conquest, Beaulieu garrisoned Mantua with thirteen thousand men, and with the residue of his force, amounting to only fifteen thousand, retired into the Tyrol, having first explicitly declared his opinion, that unless the Emperor could immediately send him a reinforcement of sixty thousand men, he ought, on the best terms he could procure, to make peace. This demand not being complied with, and the Emperor, resenting the manner in which it was expressed, Beaulieu resigned the command to Melas, and totally withdrew himself from military service*.

1796.
June 3.
Retreat of
Beaulieu.

If, as in Venice, the laws of neutrality had little effect, where the lure of gain was tendered, a treaty of peace was not likely to be respected where the same temptation was rendered additionally inviting by the thought of inflicting injury on an enemy implacably hated. Under pretence that the commerce and navy of England were too much favoured, and without any complaint or expostulation, Bonaparte, by command of his government, directed General Vaubois with his division to invade the Tuscan territory. To deceive the English, he appeared to direct his march toward Pisa and Florence; but, suddenly changing his direction, he entered Leghorn. Apprized indirectly of the enemy's approach, the majority of merchants, acting under the advice of Mr. Windham, the minister of Great Britain, made such strenuous exertions, that, in two days, twenty-three English ships found a safe refuge in Corsica, carrying away almost all the British property in the warehouses, and a large supply of bullocks for the fleet. A few English subjects disregarded the advice, and confided in the governor's promises of protection; their property alone fell into the hands of the French, who, in revenge for their disappointment of more ample plunder, destroyed a rich

Capture of
Leghorn.

29th.

* Homme d'État, tome iii. p. 360.

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factory, established for the reception of British manufactures and merchandize from the East and West Indies. To this measure succeeded a command, issued by Bonaparte himself, to examine the books in counting houses and the inventories of warehouses, to ascertain the property of England or English merchants, the Emperor, the Empress of Russia; in fine, to princes or individuals belonging to the nations with which the French were at war; and to discover all goods deposited for their use with any merchant of Leghorn. This measure had the effect of depriving the English of every port in the Mediterranean, except Corsica; but it was more injurious to its authors than to those against whom it was directed; neutral nations regarded with suspicion the merchants of France; and General Vaubois, a frank, honourable soldier, regretting to see himself the instrument of such exactions, hastily quitted Florence and rejoined the army*.

Siege of
Mantua.

20th.

Observations
on Bonaparte.

Sensible of its importance in the pursuit of his further project of plundering and subjugating Genoa, Venice, the States of the Church, and Naples, Bonaparte occupied himself seriously in the siege of Mantua. At first he hoped to capture it by a coup-de-main; but, that failing, it was formally invested and summoned†.

It is now necessary to direct attention to the progress of the war in other quarters; but, considering the extraordinary events already recorded, and anticipating the prodigious circumstances which for twenty ensuing years marked the life of Bonaparte, it is not unfit to offer a few observations. In this short warfare of four months, he displayed all the features, good and bad, by which, as an individual, he was afterward distinguished. His bravery, the piercing rapidity and correctness of his perception, his sudden determination and unhesitating action, the greatness of his plans, and

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. p. 71. Lacrételle, tome xiii. p. 188.—
Homme d'Etat, tome iii. p. 413.

† To appreciate justly the profound treachery with which these attempts were to be conducted, it is necessary to pursue the course of Napoléon's correspondence, both public and confidential, with the Directory and their ministers and agents in foreign courts, as detailed in the *Moniteur*, and in the collection already so often referred to, called *Œuvres de Napoléon*.

his fertility in resources, are above all praise and almost all comparison. In the command of his army, he had shewn himself, not only an excellent general, but a profound politician; gaining the love and personal affection of all the soldiery, he inspired all the officers with so much respect or fear that no one dared to contest his ascendancy or oppose his measures. His addresses to his troops, which contributed greatly to this effect, may be considered as models of eloquence, in the right sense of the word. In his position, glaring metaphors or periods classically turned would have been of little use; and vain glorious boasts, unattended with immediate results, would have been unavailing; but he made those impressive appeals to the pride and the feelings of his followers which inflamed at once their passions and their hopes; he was not sparing of personal commendations to any who distinguished themselves, and in his public dispatches attributed to them, by name, exploits utterly surpassing belief, but calculated to inflame pride and inspire emulation*. Yet, while he exacted rigid discipline and implicit obedience in service, he dwelt upon their wants, and indicated the relief of them in a manner which shewed that, toward the vanquished, no restraint would be imposed on cupidity or licentiousness. In his dispatches he had often occasion to describe the wretched state of his army, which was not utterly removed, although success afforded some alleviation. For public purposes, enormous tributes were imposed on every enemy who was subdued; every neutral who was terrified, and every friendly power who was invaded, was made, by rigid requisitions, to yield even beyond its political means to the exactions of the invaders.

The sums acquired were generally transmitted to Paris, where the irreparable derangement of the revenue, and the impossibility of devising means of supply, rendered them peculiarly acceptable. Bonaparte

* See, for example, his dispatch to the Directory of 6th July, 1796, *Œuvres*, tome i. p. 72.

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Plunder of
works of art.

seems to have been conscious of the superiority he thus acquired over his rulers, when he wrote to them in terms approaching to contumely: "I send you," he said, "a dozen millions (£500,000); they will not "come amiss to your army on the Rhine."

It would be useless to specify the various sums thus exacted; but one mode of plunder is sufficient to stigmatize this campaign, and reduce those who ought to have emulated the character of civilized heroes to mere predatory barbarians: it is the seizure of the most esteemed works of art, the pride and characteristics of the cities of Italy, and sending them to Paris. To make this plunder effectual, a committee of artists was deputed to attend the progress of the army and regulate its robberies; and a museum was established in the French capital, that the people might be gratified, not with the productions of native genius, but with those which, wanting talent to create, they had the cruelty to steal*. But, in the midst of this plunder, in the full perception of the peculation which he had the desire but not the power to repress, the hands of Bonaparte were unsullied. He came to the command a poor man; and, although he might, without a chance of reproach, have appropriated to himself an ample portion of the spoils; although terrified or vanquished sovereigns tendered to him sums which might have created, where it had not previously existed, a love of lucre, he never presented an empty purse to have it filled with gold, or a casket that might be replenished with diamonds: he had no money beyond the fair amount of his pay and allowances; no trophies, except some flags and other honorary trifles which the Directory presented to his acceptance.

Bonaparte's
disinterested-
ness.Peculation
of agents.

His forbearance was not followed as an example: the frauds committed by the commissaries in all departments were highly disapproved by the Directory; and Bonaparte, sensible of the evil effects they produced,

* I forbear to expatiate on this odious subject: the well-judged sentiment of a French gentleman may be seen in Lacrételle, tome xiii. p 172; for those of a British author equally sensible and just, see Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoléon*, vol. iii. p. 142.

made great efforts to abolish them; but, seeing the violence used in obtaining supplies, and the chicanery in paying and accounting for them, every officer indulged in similar acts; and the soldiery, stimulated by their own desires, and encouraged by such examples, indulged in their utmost extent their propensities to plunder and licentiousness. When the repetition of scenes, too disgusting to be mentioned, aroused indignation, and husbands, fathers, or brothers avenged their dishonour on the perpetrators, then the sanguinary ferocity of the commander displayed itself; and, because French blood had been shed, victims were devoted to the musket and the bayonet; towns were threatened with general conflagration; and, to shew that the menace was not used merely for the purpose of terror, the town of Binasco, in the Milanese, was, by command of Bonaparte himself, mercilessly consumed, and every building, public and private, destroyed*.

As a measure preparatory to the approaching campaign in Germany, French influence had obtained from the Cabinet of Berlin the establishment of a new line of neutrality, and appointed what was called a federative army for its preservation, maintained at the expense of the states of the north of Germany†. It was not expected, at the commencement of the campaign, that the army of Italy would have been so much in advance of the other two; for, whatever might be expected from the young commander, it could not be anticipated that Jourdan and Moreau, aided by such officers as Kléber, Marceau, Bernadotte, Desaix, Saint Cyr, Ney, Soult, Oudinot, Lecourbe, and Richepanse, would have been unable to commence their operations until those of Bonaparte had been attended with such signal glory and success. After much discussion and cabal at Vienna, the command, which Clerfaye had resigned, was confided to the Archduke Charles, brother of the Emperor; a prince in the prime of life, and

Campaign in
Germany.

The Archduke
Charles
commands.

* For the passages, not particularly noted, I have consulted the historical and biographical works relating to the times and to Napoléon.

† *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 374. et seqq.

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Position of
the armies.

who, notwithstanding the bad state of his health, shewed a vigorous mind in conceiving, and a brilliant courage in executing, military plans. He was opposed to Jourdan, while the army to act against Moreau was led by the intrepid and experienced veteran Wurmser.

The situation of the Imperial and French armies in Germany is thus described. The Rhine separated them from the frontiers of Switzerland to the environs of Spire, where it ceased to be their common barrier. Beyond that city, the cantonments, which they respectively occupied at the distance of some leagues from each other, extended across the Upper Palatinate, the Duchy of Deuxponts, and the Hunsrück. The line occupied by the Imperial army passed through the town of Spire, Neustadt, Kayerslautern, Kussel, and from thence, crossing the Nahe, terminated at the Rhine, in the neighbourhood of Bacharach. At this point, that river again became the common separation, and continued so to beyond Cologne, between the river Sieg and the town of Dusseldorf. The two armies divided between them the space from the river to the last-mentioned fortress, before which the French had an intrenched camp. The Imperialists occupied, on the Rhine, the strong fortresses of Philipsburg, Mannheim, Mentz, and Ehrenbreitstein. The French possessed on the upper Rhine those of Alsace, and on the lower Rhine that of Dusseldorf. The French armies were estimated at a hundred and sixty thousand men, while the Imperialists did not amount to a hundred and fifty thousand. In conformity with the terms of the armistice, the Archduke gave ten days' notice of its termination; and, anxious to commence operations on the offensive, the French army of the Sambre and the Meuse made an irruption into Germany. The objects intended to be achieved were, a diversion which should prevent the sending detachments of the Imperial army to Italy; the separation of the princes of the empire from the head; the raising of contributions, and the possession of some principal fortresses, such as Ehrenbreitstein, Mannheim, Ingoldstadt, and Ulm. Contrary to the system so well enforced and so vigorously acted

May 21.

31.

upon by Bonaparte, the two Imperial generals were quite independent of each other; and consequently the advantages to be gained by individuality of view, will, and action, were lost.

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Several ingenious manœuvres and sanguinary conflicts took place, until the Court of Vienna, found it necessary to send Wurmser into Italy with thirty thousand men; a resolution which the French had learned by means of their spies before it was communicated to the Imperial army, and formed their measures accordingly. The departure of so large a body from the Upper Rhine, created an opening which an expedition of the Archduke to the lower Rhine would not permit him immediately to fill up: and Moreau, taking advantage of the crisis, passed over to the right bank of the Rhine, captured the fort of Kehl, which was ill defended, or, as it is suggested, treacherously abandoned by the Suabians, and, aided by Desaix, captured Freydenstadt and Rastadt, defeated the Imperialists in a bloody engagement, and forced them to retreat to Eslingen. The Archduke, judiciously viewing his situation, advanced to encounter Moreau, and, although attacked at a disadvantage, maintained his ground so bravely, that the French succeeded only in compelling him to retreat toward Pfortzheim, while the loss on both sides was nearly equal. Alarmed at seeing a portion of his dominions invaded, and trembling for the residue, the Duke of Wurtemberg obtained an armistice; and Moreau gained the advantage of detaching one potentate from the cause of the Emperor, and of a free passage for his troops toward Bavaria.

Wurmser
dispatched
into Italy.

June 24 to
July 5.
Successes of
the French.

9th.

The Duke of
Wurtemberg
obtains an
armistice.

While their success lasted, the French levied a large contribution on Frankfort, and from the Margrave of Baden, the Duke of Wurtemberg, the circle of Suabia, and all the petty princes who solicited a suspension of arms. Moreau advanced to the Danube; but the Archduke contested with him every foot of ground. A sanguinary and well-contested conflict, which took place at Neresheim, although no victory could be claimed, was disastrous to the Republicans.

Contributions
levied.

31st.
Battle of
Neresheim.

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Defeat of
Bernadotte.

August 23.

Jourdan's
retreat.Moreau's
retreat.

October 2.

Effect of
these events
on England.

Moreau, enfeebled and straightened, began to surround himself with defensive precautions. Jourdan's army, which, with little opposition, had crossed the Rhine, made confident by success, relaxed its discipline, and, occupied in pillage, neglected most important duties, when the Archduke opposed to him a detachment of thirty thousand men, brought by forced marches from the army opposed to Moreau, and, after a brave conflict, routed Bernadotte, who was marching with the advanced guard towards Ratisbon. The peasantry, in revenge for recent acts of rapacity and cruelty, fell upon the scattered detachments of the French, and obliged them to convert a retreat, begun in good military order, into a promiscuous flight. Jourdan fought one more battle between Bamberg and Wintzberg, in which he was defeated and compelled to retreat, in a fortnight, through a country, the conquest of which had cost him two months.

Apprized of the difficulties and dangers with which Jourdan was beset, Moreau detached Desaix with eighteen thousand men to trace his retreat; but it was too rapid for his endeavours. The contagion of disorder began to infect the followers of Moreau; and, justly considering that the well-being of France depended, in a great degree, on the safety of his army, he commenced a retreat, which will for ever be celebrated in the annals of war. He concentrated his force, scattered over a territory of sixty leagues, from the Lake of Constance to the Danube, repassed that river, and evacuated Ulm, and having gained a battle at Biberach, in which he displayed consummate generalship*, reached and traversed the difficult passes of the Black Forest, sent his artillery through the neutral territory of Switzerland, and with a broken, but not vanquished army, arrived at Fribourg. Thus one portion of Carnot's plan of campaign entirely failed.

In their consequences, if not in their immediate effects, these events had considerable influence on the affairs of England, not merely as an ally of the Empe-

* In this combat, a corps of emigrants, led by the Prince of Condé, and his son the Duc D'Enghien, displayed great bravery.

ror, and having a common interest with him in the result of hostilities, but also as a separate and individual power. By the French, the importance of every achievement, the advantage of every acquisition, was estimated by a reference to the ill it was calculated to inflict on England, their most hated enemy. The unprincipled expedition against Leghorn was undertaken chiefly with a view to English plunder; and if the immediate object was not fully attained, an advantage resulted highly gratifying to the enemy.

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The revolt of Corsica had always been bitterly resented, and the recovery ardently desired. The people of that island, fickle, restless, and incapable of subjection to any system of laws, were soon disgusted with a constitution establishing a house of Parliament, with unlimited freedom of debate, and a viceroy. Jealousies were entertained concerning Paoli, who was supposed to be discontented at seeing that station, which he considered due to himself, occupied by Sir Gilbert Elliott; he had been elected, by acclamation, president of the Parliament, but declined the office, under intimations that his assuming it would be disagreeable to the Viceroy. This surmise was not without foundation. Sir Gilbert Elliott, suspicious of concealed designs in Paoli, disfavoured all who were supposed to have any communication with him, and, on no better ground, obliged Colonel Moore to leave the island. Beside these, and many other peculiar causes of discontent, the constitution in its whole contrivance was too costly for a poor, and too full of restraints for a refractory, population.

State of
Corsica.

A faction, favourable to France, was known to exist, and daily gathered strength; and their confidence was elated by the increasing renown of their countryman, Bonaparte. Apprized of their sentiments and strength, that general, at an early period of his career, wrote to Faypoult, the French minister at Genoa, for exact information, promising to send over fifteen hundred fowling pieces to support an insurrection*. At

Views of
Bonaparte.

June 7th.

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. p. 52, 90.

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1796.

the capture of Leghorn he collected a large number of Corsican refugees, whom he amply equipped and supplied with arms and ammunition. Under the command of General Gentili, they were soon sufficiently powerful to brave the governor by openly wearing the tri-coloured cockade*.

July.
Porto Ferrajo
taken.

Anticipating events which, under all circumstances, might be deemed inevitable, a squadron, under Captain Nelson, with a body of troops under Major Duncan, gained possession, on the first summons, without an attempt at resistance, of Porto Ferrajo, in the isle of Elba, a port which the occupation of Leghorn by the French rendered of considerable importance†. Bonaparte saw this event with indifference; it was not to be avoided, as the English were masters of the sea; but when Corsica should be recovered, of which he spoke with confidence, they would easily be dispossessed‡. It was found that the expense of maintaining possession was not to be requited by any territorial advantages in an island productive only of wild hogs; and neither the people nor the country appeared capable of improvement. The money lavishly, although not improperly, employed, procured us no influence, and the loss could give no reasonable ground for regret§.

Oct.
Corsica
evacuated.

In aid of his other emissaries, Bonaparte had detached all the Corsicans to be found in the ranks of his army, inciting their courage by pointing out the glory which would be their portion, if, unassisted, they could drive out the proud English. They took the island, but did not acquire the glory; for as, by an order from home, the troops were to be withdrawn and placed at Gibraltar, no more resistance was made than was necessary to secure the retreat;—the fleet quitted the Mediterranean; and Porto Ferrajo, not being of sufficient value to warrant the expense and bloodshed of a siege, was also evacuated. Salicetti, as commissioner from the government, accompanied Gentili to the island.

21st.

Porto Ferrajo
also.

* Correspondence of Lord Collingwood, p. 32.

† Rose's Naval History, p. 271.

‡ Œuvres, tome i. p. 86.

§ Correspondence of Lord Collingwood, p. 30.

The instructions given by Bonaparte were, in many respects, worthy the reign of terror. A general pardon was to be granted to all who had merely been led astray; but the four deputies who had carried the crown to the King of England, the members of government, and the contrivers of that infamous act of treason, many by name, and, among them, Pozzo di Borgo, were to be arrested and tried by a military commission; and all emigrants, if any should have the audacity to maintain their abode in the lands occupied by the troops of the republic, were to be arrested. Much of the force of this edict was rendered ineffectual by the retreat of the intended victims on board the English fleet. Paoli lived out his days in peace and safety, and Pozzo di Borgo survived to give great annoyance to Bonaparte*.

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As the French advanced in their successful career in Italy, terror produced its full effect on the sovereigns of that country. The King of Naples was now permitted to purchase, at the price of eight millions (£334,000), a treaty of peace, and to abandon all his alliances. The armistice, sold in the spring to the Duke of Parma, was now, on the mediation of Spain, converted into a permanent treaty. Animated by hopes which were not to be realized, the Pope suspended the payments and the contributions he had promised as the price of an armistice, and probably gratified rather than offended the republic, by affording an opportunity of indulging their predatory propensities on a rich and defenceless foe†.

Naples purchases peace.

Parma.

It is noticed by Berthier‡, as a remarkable circumstance, that the easiest and most liberal terms of peace were granted to princes of that house of Bourbon, the chief of which the Republic had precipitated from the throne. This liberality proved that the French desired

Revolution in the States of Modena.

* *Cœuvres de Napoléon*, tome iii. pp. 187, 222.—*Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 488.—*Life of Sir John Moore*, vol. i. p. 87, et seqq.—*Eighteen Campaigns*, vol. i. p. 78, and the *Histories* generally.

† *Eighteen Campaigns*, vol. i. pp. 20, 46, 83. It is to be observed that the portion of this publication hitherto cited, is a translation of General Berthier's "*Campagne du Général Buonaparte en Italie pendant les années 4me. et 5me. de la République.*"

‡ Berthier, p. 172.—*Eighteen Campaigns*, vol. i. p. 83.

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Formation of
the Cispadane
Republic.

October.

State of
Holland.

only the freedom of their country, and not revenge on their rulers; but it is to be observed that, when they made these supposed liberal terms, the French were, in reality, pursuing the dethronement of the princes they affected to favour, and the revolutionizing of their dominions. Their treaties contained stipulations for an amnesty of all political offences; in other words, an assurance to all traitors that they should find protectors in the French, while, by the same compacts, emigrants were to be exiled; and the republicans exercised unbounded vengeance on those whom they accused of treason. Thus were disseminated and encouraged plans for overturning established governments; and intriguers were made bold by an assurance of safety. The effect speedily appeared. Reggio, Ferrara, Modena, and Bologna, renounced the dominion of the Duke of Modena, and, protected by the French, formed a committee of government, the members of which took an oath of fidelity to the French Republic, and were to govern in its name; convoked an assembly at Modena, decreed the organization of a sedentary guard, and of a legion of five cohorts, and the establishment of a council, or military commission. They also sent a deputation to Milan, the capital of the free Transpadane cities, to maintain amity and fraternity; and appointed commissioners to frame a constitution on the principle of a wise and rational democracy, in which, it was said, the benefit of freedom would be increased, in proportion as it approximated to that of France. The tree of liberty was planted with military pomp in the great square at Bologna, amidst acclamations of "Viva la Repubblica Francese." When they presented their constitution to Bonaparte for approval, he congratulated them in warm terms, and prognosticated their future happiness and glory*.

Holland soon felt the evils attending her newly formed connexion: her new patriots had reduced her from the pride of an independent state to the meanness of a mere provincial dependency; although allowed,

* Eighteen Campaigns, vol. i. pp. 84, 112.

as it were in scorn, to retain the lofty titles which Europe had conceded to the bravery and virtue of her true and ancient patriots. On the commencement of hostilities, her colonial possessions fell an easy prey to British enterprize. Demerary, Berbice, and Essequibo, yielded without resistance to a few troops under General Whyte, conveyed in a small naval force, commanded by Captain Parr.

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Her colonies
taken.

Previously to this success, and without much greater difficulty, the island of Ceylon, in which the fort of Columbo alone presented any resistance, surrendered to Colonel Stewart and Captain Gardner, on terms of moderate and honourable capitulation. The Moluccas, Amboyna, and Banda, were also taken: the settlements were in themselves of considerable value; and the captors, beside a great acquisition in spice and other produce, obtained nearly forty thousand pounds sterling in money*.

Feb. 15, 16.

To arouse the resentment and stimulate the courage of the people, or, more properly, to avow in the strongest terms their dependence and subjection, the National Assembly of the United Provinces published a manifesto, evidently of French suggestion or composition. The Batavian nation, it said, so often ill treated, oppressed, trod upon and pillaged under the mask of friendship, would no longer suffer itself to be the sport of the infamous and ambitious ministers of England, who with the dazzle of piratical treasures blinded the nation which believed itself to be free, with respect to the terrible calamities they had brought on Europe and the whole human race. In a similar tone were enumerated the transactions of the American war, the capture of St. Eustatia, the armed neutrality, the terms of the peace so disadvantageous to Holland, and the transactions in the present war, until, by the valorous French, the Netherlands were delivered from their most dangerous enemies. They complained of the embargo laid on the Dutch ships, and the retention of the proceeds after it had been demonstrated that the

May 2.
Manifesto of
the Dutch.

* Gazettes; and see Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iv. page 371. Percival's *Account of Ceylon*, pp. 52, 64.

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Batavian republic was no longer under the dominion of France, since the solemn declaration of its independence. Their colonies had been taken by means of letters signed by the Prince of Orange; and the British ministry had endeavoured, by engaging in their service the discontented military, to raise in the United Provinces a civil war similar to that in La Vendée. The independent Batavian nation therefore solemnly declared, that, obliged to defend itself against the perfidy and violence of Great Britain, it would repel every act of aggression on its liberty, its independence, its rights, and its legitimate possessions, and use all possible means to obtain satisfaction and indemnity for the losses sustained through a perfidious ally.

Order in
council.

September 3.

16.
Rejected by
the Dutch.

Had this production had no further intent than that which is apparent on the surface, it might have been passed over as a mere piece of empty bombast; but its latent effect was to bind Holland to France in ties of durable subjection, and to place an insurmountable barrier against that return to a friendly relation with Great Britain, so conformable to the ancient habits and true interests of the Dutch. That this was its real intent, became obvious, when his Majesty, in council, having issued an order that articles of commerce, not being military or naval stores, might be conveyed by sea, in neutral bottoms, without molestation, to Holland and other places, France excepted, the Batavian National Assembly issued a proclamation, in which they reiterated the whole matter of their manifesto, declaring the measure to be an artifice which their people would appreciate and disdain. It was prompted only by the necessity which was felt by the British minister of accepting, under the dictation of the people, of an equitable and speedy peace; and to the want of specie and circulating capital, through which he could not succeed in making his contracts with the powers of the Baltic, without calling in the aid of the Dutch merchants. They refused, therefore, the proffered indulgence; and denounced heavy penalties against all who should import any British merchandize, particularly the produce of the territories

recently captured, or accept or pay any bills of exchange drawn from Great Britain.

Probably the spirit of disdain for England and confidence in France expressed in this proclamation, if not created, was sustained by the hopes which were entertained from an expedition sent, under Rear Admiral Engelbertin Lucas, to recover the Cape of Good Hope. It consisted only of two ships of sixty-four guns, one of fifty-four, four frigates, and a sloop, with somewhat less than two thousand men. It is suggested that, as the commanding force under Admiral Elphinstone was well known to be in those parts, so slight an expedition would not have been employed, but that the Dutch were deceived by their French allies, who, for a very valuable consideration, engaged to furnish an ample assistance, but, having received the sum, refused to fulfil their engagement*. The Dutch having reached Saldanha Bay, in the absence of the British fleet, Major-General Craig made judicious arrangements for resisting them; but his cares were relieved by the timely appearance of Admiral Elphinstone with two seventy-fours, five sixty-fours, and five frigates, and smaller vessels. Sensible that he could offer no effectual resistance, Admiral Lucas, by capitulation, surrendered his whole fleet. The trade of the colony and the reception of vessels from countries in amity with England was regulated by a prudent and liberal order in council†.

After the execution of the treaty of Basle, by which Spain consented to forget all the injuries sustained by the Bourbon family, to acknowledge the republic, and to cede a portion of her dominions, it was not difficult to foresee a strict and friendly union between the two countries. England was hated by both; and, after the evacuation of Toulon, Godoy, who, by his influence with the Queen, governed Spain and was devoted to France, omitted no opportunity of inflaming prejudice and promoting causes of quarrel. Efforts were made by the British government to revive in Spain those

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Expedition to
recover the
Cape of Good
Hope.

August 19.
Capture of the
squadron.

December 28.

Compact be-
tween France
and Spain.

* Rose, page 273.

† State Papers, Annual Register, vol. xxxviii.

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1796.

May 13.

April 19.

principles which had previously governed her conduct; but they were frustrated by Godoy, who had recourse to the old expedient of a supposed friendly power turning to enmity, that of proposing to become a mediator. Feigned complaints and fabulous narratives of English aggression were daily renewed; and, however adverse the nation might be to such a measure, a council of state was convened to deliberate on certain propositions relative to a war with England, in which it was decided that Spain ought not, in the present state of affairs, to renounce the peace she had effected with France; that she ought not, on any account, to form an alliance with England for the purpose of war; and that as, left to her own resources, she could not contend with success against England she must call in the aid of allies. That the naval power of France, combined with Spain and Holland, if insufficient to crush that of England, might at least so engage her attention in Europe, as to preclude her making any attempt against the Spanish colonies; and hopes were expressed that the northern states of Europe would enter into an armed neutrality*. The malignant influence of Godoy, now styled the Prince of the Peace, was displayed in efforts to injure Great Britain, by means of Portugal, in the commerce of which country a large amount of British capital was engaged. It began to be reported that a French army was to march to Lisbon, through Spain. Mr. Pitt, in answer to inquiries of the mercantile body, denied his belief in the rumours; but the Queen of Portugal had already, under the influence of terror, consented to make Lisbon a free port; and at length all doubt and suspense were terminated by the signature of a compact at St. Ildefonso, by which an offensive and defensive alliance was established between France and Spain: each, on demand, was to support the other with military and naval forces; and as England was the only power against which Spain had to allege any direct grievances, the alliance was to be executed only against

* Memoirs of Don Emanuel Godoy, vol. i. p. 479, 483.

her during the present war, and Spain was to remain neuter with respect to all other powers armed against the republic.

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In vindication of his proceedings, the King of Spain published a manifesto, complaining of the conduct of Great Britain during the whole war, and enumerating many particulars of a nature too slight and private to prove any thing but the rancour of the power from which it emanated. War was immediately declared against Great Britain. To this paper a manly and sensible answer was published by the British government; the composition, it is said, of Mr. Canning*; the pretexts advanced were severally noticed and refuted, and, confident of having acquitted himself to the world of any share in originating the present war, his Majesty committed to the Divine Providence the issue of the contest. Thus was Spain, after all family alliance had been destroyed by means the most flagitious, placed, with regard to France, in the very position she had been drawn into by the family compact; and thus did her wicked and misguided government prepare the way for those evils which for a time subverted the throne, and drenched the kingdom in blood†.

1796.
Spanish Mani-
festo,
Oct. 5.

Answer.

While glory thus attended them in war, and success in intrigue, the French government in the interior was beset with serious cares and troubles; but the division of their opponents into royalists and terrorists, diminished the perils of their situation; for both these parties, while earnestly desiring their overthrow, regarded each other with a hatred still more deep and rancorous. Babœuf, acting on his avowed principles, was fortified by the accession of some conspicuous individuals. Among them was Drouet, the post-master of St. Menehould, who, on being discharged from an Austrian prison, made to the Council of Five Hundred a bombastic recital of his heroism, his wrongs, and his woes; to him were added Santerre, Rossignol, and some other military commanders, equally worthless. They

State of the
French
government.

Babœuf's
conspiracy.

* Alison, vol. iii. p. 186.

† *Memoirs of Don Emanuel Godoy*, vol. i. p. 407; vol. ii. p. 1; *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 408; tome xiii. p. 132; the *Histories generally*, and the *Collections of State Papers*.

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1796.

formed a society on the model, and intended to exert the power, of the Jacobins. Babœuf proposed to establish an Agrarian law, and to murder the five Directors, their ministers, and all royalists who had escaped the vigilance of the Committee of Public Safety. The elegancies of the court of Barras were peculiarly offensive to the old supporters of the red cap, as an emblem of liberty and equality; and, although their principal rendezvous near the Pantheon had been closed, inferior houses afforded them places of meeting and a centre of connexion. Their proceedings being quite unreserved and unguarded, the Directory, apprized of all their projects and intentions, found no difficulty in arresting the principal conspirators, particularly Gracchus himself, some of the excluded members of the Convention, General Rossignol, and Drouet. The escape of Drouet was connived at, if not favoured; but the others were reserved for trial.

May 3.

Insurrection.

Sept. 3, 4.

Before this event could take place, a body of three or four thousand conspirators assembled in the Faubourgs, and a portion of them made an ineffectual attempt to invade the Luxembourg, while the residue marched to the camp of Grenelle, near Paris, and, with cries of "The constitution of 1793; down with the councils, down with the tyrants," endeavoured to excite the military; but they were instantly subdued; the greater portion was permitted to escape; many were captured, and nineteen, by the sentence of a military tribunal, were condemned and executed; twenty were doomed to transportation, and fourteen to imprisonment. From the rashness of the attempt, and the total absence of arrangement and support, it was by many believed, whether justly or not, to be a mere trick of the government, to impress an opinion of their strength, and discomfit the agents of disorder in the provinces. Not to return to this subject, it may be sufficient to say, that, after the lapse of many months, Babœuf and Darthé were condemned to death, and seven others to transportation. While the Directors received with dissatisfaction the congratulations of the royalists on their triumph over the Jacobins, they

1797.
May 23.

scrupled not to renew the worn-out fable, that all the excitements to massacre and an Agrarian law emanated from the cabinets of London and Vienna, and the privy council of the Pretender*.

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1796.

The Directors were still far from enjoying their situation in ease; they dreaded the daily growing renown and influence of the General of their army of Italy, anticipating, without any great depth of prescience, that his power, if not checked, must prove fatal to their own. Attempts were made to raise the renown of Moreau above that of Bonaparte; but, beside the striking difference between an enterprising conqueror, always advancing, and an unsuccessful general, who owed his glory to a masterly retreat, the quiet and unpretending character of Moreau, his lenity toward those whom he conquered, and the moderate and gentle tone of his dispatches, were not calculated to make strong impressions on a people ever delighted with the effusions of vain glory, the vaunts of military prowess, the assumption of superiority over all whom they opposed, and the display of contempt toward the vanquished.

Dread of
Bonaparte.

Whatever satisfaction or stability could flow from military success, was amply supplied during the residue of the year by the General of the army of Italy. Apprized of the movement of General Wurmser, he hastened to strike the first blow; and raising, for a time, the siege of Mantua, met and defeated the Austrians at Castiglione; they underwent the like misfortune at Peschiera and Corona; and the French, having taken all the lines on the Mincio, resumed the position they had quitted before Mantua. For more than a month, the judicious plans and rapid movements of Bonaparte conferred fresh honours and increasing advantages on his army; and, at length, General Wurmser, as well to save the residue of his force, as to strengthen a most important possession, threw himself into Mantua†.

Army of Italy.

July 29.

Aug. 3, 6, 11,
to Sept. 13.
Battles of
Castiglione,
Peschiera,
and Corona.

Wurmser
retires into
Mantua.

* In this narrative, I have chiefly followed Lacrételle, tome xiii. p. 12, et seqq.; but the account of facts is given with no material variance in all the historical works.

† The battles fought in this period were Borgoforte and Governolo (August 24), Serravalle (September 3), Roveredo (4), Covolo (7), Bassano (8), Cerca

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 1796.
 May 29.
 Violence and
 cruelty of the
 French.

As if the manifesto issued by Bonaparte, when first he violated the Venetian territory, had been composed only to shew how well he could define duties, every one of which he was determined to disregard, the progress of the French army, in that as in every other country into which they penetrated, was marked by every excess and every crime which could disgrace power and irritate weakness. Beside the levies exacted as public requisitions, religion was contemned and ridiculed, private property pillaged, female modesty grossly and licentiously abused, and the respectability of age and station every where degraded and insulted. The angry feelings created by these outrages enabled the friends of the Emperor to encourage insurrections, which, in different parts, produced revengeful inflictions on the invaders, and savage acts of retaliation on their part. A tumult at Arquata occasioned the burning of several villages, while a great number of the most respectable inhabitants were destroyed by the musket; an insurrection in Romagna drew on the country a similar visitation; Lugo, Binasco, and several other towns were burnt, and hundreds of the peasantry murdered. The city of Pavia, which had shewn a spirit of strenuous resistance, was threatened with total destruction; thrice, as a French narrator states, had the order to set fire to the city expired on Bonaparte's lips, when the garrison of the castle, which had been taken by the people, burst from their confinement and arrived: their names were called over, and none were missing. If the blood of a single Frenchman had been shed, he had resolved, he said, to raise on the ruins of Pavia a column, inscribed with the impressive words, "Here Pavia stood." As it was, he contented himself with shooting all the municipality, and sending two hundred prisoners into France as hostages*.

 Other
 victories.

While the siege of Mantua was maintained, several other victories attended the French arms, the most distinguished of which was that of Arcola, gained over

(12), and Legnano (13). This list is taken from the *Précis Chronologique* prefixed to *Les Œuvres de Napoléon*, tome i.

* *Journals of Eighteen Campaigns of Bonaparte*, vol. i. p. 35.

the Austrian General Alvinzi, after a conflict maintained with great intrepidity during three days. These successes were preparatory to attempts, equally tyrannical and perfidious, projected against the Pope, Genoa, and Venice, which had always been meditated, but awaited the fall of Mantua, and other events, for their full execution.

England, incapable of aiding or influencing the military operations on the continent, maintained a sort of separate war. After undergoing most discouraging difficulties, through the prevalence of tempestuous weather, the squadron under Admiral Christian, at length, proceeded toward the West Indies. In this struggle against the elements, Admiral Cornwallis had been obliged to quit his damaged flag-ship, the Royal Sovereign, and was prevented by ill-health from resuming his command, or proceeding to his destination. According to the properly rigid rules of the service, he was brought to a court-martial, but, to the great satisfaction of the fleet, honourably acquitted.

Lieutenant-Colonel Moore, who had, as already intimated, been dismissed from Corsica, under unjust and disrespectful circumstances, by Sir Gilbert Elliott, received immediate and honourable justice from the Duke of York, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Dundas, and was intrusted to command the troops sent to reinforce Sir Ralph Abercromby, with the rank of Brigadier-General. On his arrival at Barbadoes, two strong detachments were ordered to Saint Domingo; another, whose success has already been mentioned, to Demerara and Berbice; and a third to Ste. Lucie. This island, strong by nature, and skilfully fortified by French engineers, was vigorously defended at every point. The contest continued a month; but at length British perseverance prevailed; a capitulation was signed, and, in the absence of Sir Ralph Abercromby, the island was left under the government of General Moore*.

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Proceedings in
the West
Indies.

Court-martial
on Admiral
Cornwallis,
Feb.

April 17.

Promotion of
Colonel
Moore.

April 15.

Capture of
Ste. Lucie.

22nd to
May 24.

* The particulars are well detailed in the Life of Sir John Moore, vol. i. p. 109, et. seqq.

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Re-capture of
St. Vincent's.
July 26.

Grenada.

Saint Vincent's was also captured, after a less protracted struggle. The French, being driven from their last tenable position, and their access to the Charib country intercepted, surrendered by capitulation all the posts which they occupied*.

In Grenada and its dependencies, the enormities of rebels had been carried to a fearful extent. Encouraged by French precepts and examples, and stimulated by innate ferocity, the insurgents had committed, in every horrible form, all the atrocities which furious passion, armed with resistless power, can dictate. After the surrender of the Republican troops, Fédon, the leader of the insurgents, withdrew with his followers into two strong positions; and, when these were on the point of being forced, gave a dreadful specimen of savage exasperation, by slaughtering, in the face of the troops, who could give no assistance, every European within his power. This exterminating rage was not limited to prisoners, or to those who could justly be deemed their enemies, but extended even to those who had taken up arms in their cause and fought with them in the ranks. Finally, they were driven into the woods, and many were killed by German riflemen†. For the relief of the unhappy colonists of Saint Vincent's and Grenada, the British government issued a million and a half in exchequer bills, on liberal terms, both as to interest and the periods of payment‡.

St. Domingo.

In Saint Domingo, the great object of British enterprize was not achieved. Before the expected reinforcement could arrive, the enemy was well prepared for resistance: blood was uselessly shed in unavailing conflicts; but the deaths so incurred might be deemed happy, in comparison with those produced by the yellow fever—the curse of the clime, and the dreadful scourge of the British army. Thus Saint Domingo remained a field of contest, while Guadaloupe still continued in the enemy's possession§.

May.

* Rose, p. 268.

† Ibid.

‡ Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iv. p. 385.§ Rainsford's *History of Saint Domingo*, p. 201.—Rose 269.

Admiral Richery, after being long blockaded, effected his escape from Cadiz, and, with seven sail of the line, reached Newfoundland. As we had only a fifty-gun ship and three frigates on the coast, he effected a landing unopposed, destroyed some fishermen's huts, demolished some stages for curing of fish, secured some plunder, and returned to Rochelle*.

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1796.
Attack on
Newfound-
land.

The naval conflicts during this year were not calculated to affect the results of the war: no general engagement between fleets occurred, although several separate actions conferred glory on those who conducted them. After a gallant action, Sir John Borlase Warren, with four frigates, captured, near the Saints, four merchantmen, protected by six frigates and a sloop, one of which he took, while the remainder found safety by escaping into the narrow part of the Raz de Fontenoy. Other engagements and captures in different parts gave renown to Captain Martin and Captain Williams, Lord Amelius Beauclerc, Captain Manley, Captain Bowen, Commodore Nelson, Captain Craufurd, Admiral Murray, and Captain Mainwaring. The narratives of all their encounters possess some interest; but they are destitute of variety, and deficient in general importance†.

Naval engage-
ments.

March to
December.

The gallant and enterprising Sir Sidney Smith, commanding the ship *Diamond*, on the coast of France, with a detachment of boats, boarded and took a French lugger-privateer, in Havre de Grace. The coast was alarmed, and, an overbearing force of gun-boats and other vessels assailing him, the intrepid commander was obliged to yield to numbers and weight of metal. The crew of the *Diamond*, unable, from their position and the state of the weather, to render assistance, had the mortification, as helpless spectators, to witness the rescue of the prize and the captivity of their captain. On some pretext of his being engaged in exciting insurrections in the Republic, the French commandant sent him, under a strong escort, a prisoner to Paris,

Capture of Sir
Sidney Smith.
April 18.

19.

* Rose, p. 272; Macpherson, vol. iv. p. 380.

† For particulars, see Rose, p. 274, et seqq.

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1796.

Feeling of the
French
government.Negotiation
with the
Emperor.Lord
Malmesbury
goes to Paris.

where he was placed in close confinement in the Temple*.

Toward the close of the year, the situation of the Executive Directory was highly embarrassing. They had reason to be alarmed at the ill success of their arms on the Rhine, and they felt that any reverse of fortune before Mantua would deprive them of all they had acquired in Italy. The blockade of that city had once been raised, and again imminently endangered. One successful attack, which they had every reason to apprehend, would reduce their affairs to a state of desperation. A negotiation for a separate peace with the Emperor was attempted, and an armistice was proposed; peace would have been conformable to the general policy of the Republic; but Bonaparte resolutely opposed the armistice, as pregnant with evil, but incapable of producing advantage. General Clarke, the confidential friend of Carnot, was employed to smooth the difficulties attending this proposed negotiation, and, as it is suggested by one writer, to be a spy on the conduct of Napoléon†, or, according to the authority of another, to allure him to the party of the minority in the Directory‡. The opinion of Bonaparte prevailed on the question of an armistice; but a negotiation for peace proceeded, and the British government, impelled by all circumstances, internal and external, sent Lord Malmesbury to Paris to make overtures for pacification.

* Histories.

† Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantes, tome x. page 344.

‡ Homme d'Etat, tome iv. page 145.

CHAPTER THE NINETY-EIGHTH.

1796—1797.

Dissolution of Parliament.—General result of the Elections.—Unavailing effort of the Whig Club.—Plans of the seditious.—Thelwall's Lectures.—His treatment at Yarmouth.—Trial of Stone for high treason.—Kyd Wake and others.—Good harvest.—Birth of the Princess Charlotte of Wales.—Unhappy State of the Prince and Princess.—Address of the City of London.—Meeting of Parliament.—Mr. Addington re-elected Speaker.—King's Speech.—Address in the House of Lords.—Amendment moved by Earl Fitzwilliam.—Rejected.—Address in the House of Commons.—Mr. Pitt.—Threat of invasion.—Means of increasing the Navy.—Mr. Sheridan.—Mr. Fox.—Bill brought in.—Opposition by Mr. Curwen.—Mr. Wilberforce.—Mr. Sheridan.—Bills passed.—Message concerning Spain.—Finance.—Mr. Pitt's statement.—Mr. Grey.—Mr. Fox.—Resolutions agreed to.—Mr. Fox on a grant to the Emperor.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Grey.—Moves an Amendment—which is rejected.—Proceedings in the Common Hall of London.—Mr. Fox's motion.—Observations in the Common Hall.—Amendment by Mr. Bragge.—Further advances to the Emperor required.—Opposed.—Granted.—Difficulties at the Bank.—Loan readily subscribed.—Spirit shewn in the City—and elsewhere.—Motion about La Fayette.—Mr. Windham.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Dundas.—Motion rejected.

Soon after the prorogation, the House of Commons having finished its sixth session, Parliament was dissolved. In general, the contests produced little excitement. The friends of government, whatever shades

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Dissolution of
Parliament.

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of distinction prevailed in their peculiar sentiments, disclosed none in their appeals to the public. Ministers were embarrassed with the difficulties arising from an expensive and unsuccessful war; often encumbered more than aided by fickle, selfish, and unprincipled allies; their hopes of speedily terminating the contest and obtaining indemnities for the treasure they had sacrificed were manifestly disappointed, and incapable of being revived. The pressure of increased taxation and the languor resulting from violent and hopeless exertion might have been expected to create favour for a party professedly formed to procure peace; but in their declarations the word was used without any distinct disclosure of the means by which it was to be obtained, the sacrifices either of principle or territory to be proposed, or of any consideration beyond that of laying down arms and awaiting events. Such a project was little alluring to the most indolent and acquiescent of the people; but when it was supported and strenuously advanced by those who had always been most clamorous in their applauses of our enemy and reprobation of our friends, whose prognostications of evil seemed to be the result of their wishes rather than their fears, and whose announcements of their accomplishment might easily be taken for exultation, that judicious portion of the public which, instead of contemplating only what had been lost, reflected seriously on what was yet to be contended for, was not led to countenance a feeble and querulous cry for peace, when they saw the danger with which it was encumbered by many who united with it a clamour for reform; in which, however, they were believed to include revolution.

Contest for
Westminster.

None of the contests for seats occasioned so much discussion and display as that for Westminster. Sir Alan Gardner and Mr. Fox, the old members, probably expecting an unresisted return, found Mr. Horne Tooke again in the field as an opponent. In his address to his late constituents, Mr. Fox had described the dissolved senate as "having taken more from the liberties and added more to the burthens of the

“ people than any other Parliament which had ever “ existed.” This declaration, and the speeches and addresses of the leader of opposition during the whole election, which lasted to the extreme term of fifteen days, were sufficient to conciliate the favour of the revolutionary candidates. As the crowd who came to hear these speeches, at the close of each day’s poll, were generally a mere collection of idlers, with few persons of respectability, and scarcely any electors, no forbearance or delicacy was used toward the Admiral and the government. Sir Alan Gardner was daily overborne by the clamour of the mob; Mr. Fox was heard with patience, but not with cordial applause; but Mr. Tooke with profound attention, except only when interrupted by vehement acclamation, or questions or remarks which often appeared to have been preconcerted. To these distinctions he made a title by the use of inflammatory declarations and vulgar personalities. Descending from the eminence to which his talents, his education, and his great acquirements ought to have confined him, he addressed his hearers in language studiously vulgar and offensive. He described Mr. Pitt as a dictator, elected not by the people, but by the pretorian band. Mr. Dundas was a scoundrel minister; a scoundrel both as a secretary of state and as a man; and the whole ministry a set of unacquitted felons. This ribaldry, not unmingled with passages of wit, produced great effect on the mob, but little on the electors. Sir Alan Gardner, against whose interest it was directed, was, at the close, three hundred and forty-six below Mr. Fox, and one thousand nine hundred and ninety-five above his opponent*.

Throughout the country, the results of contests were eminently favourable to government. The firm attachment of the people to the real principles of the constitution, and their confidence in the ministers, were amply displayed on many occasions; and the effect on

General result
of the elec-
tions.

* The numbers were—Fox, 5160; Gardner, 4814; Horne Tooke, 2819. The proceedings are in the daily papers of the period; and the speeches of the unsuccessful candidates in Stephens’s *Life of John Horne Tooke*, vol. ii. page 164 to 229.

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1796.

January 23.
Unavailing
effort of the
Whig Club.

February 8.

Plans of the
seditious.March 11.
Thelwall's
Lectures.

their opponents can best be described by the depressed and wailing tone of one of their most active and unsparing opponents. Mr. Erskine, as chairman of the Whig Club, desirous, according to the feeling of that body, to obtain public demonstrations against the treason and sedition bills, by subscriptions to an association, such as the Club had entered into, and which had been published in the newspapers, it was proposed that this instrument, on separate slips of parchment, should be signed individually or in small bodies, or at public meetings, convened according to the new law; and a printed letter was dispatched to the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, requesting his co-operation. This zealous promoter of reform, in his answer, explained that the association could not be advantageously tendered to the freeholders of his neighbourhood, although at York, Sheffield, and Huddersfield, it might be better received. On the whole, his correspondence with the Whig Club, on this and another proposal to obtain signatures without any public display, shews a complete despondency on his part*.

Not for want of effort, but from an altered state of the public mind, the cause of sedition made little progress. Foundations were laid for dangerous combinations under the name of unions, by which the disaffected in England, Scotland, and Ireland, were to be drawn into one league of revolution; but the machinery of forming societies not exceeding forty-nine in number, according to the provisions of the recent statute, could not readily be arranged†. To prepare some of their measures, two obscure but perniciously active members, named John Binns and John Gale Jones, were sent by the Corresponding Society to Birmingham: they delivered lectures at two alehouses; but the magistracy, duly informed of their proceedings, enforced the law, and prevented any mischief. John Thelwall, too, who had laboured in his vocation, both as a speaker and writer, undertook to itinerate, and

* Political Papers, by the Reverend C. Wyvill, vol. v. pp. 322 to 326.

† Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons, 15th March, 1799.

published a prospectus of a course of lectures to be delivered during the season of Lent, "in strict conformity with Mr. Pitt's Convention Act." The professed subject was to be classical history; but from the penury of his attainments, it was evident that he could not make any solid inquiries on that head; and it was not disguised in his prospectus that he used the title merely as a pretext, because the heads of his lectures comprised allusions to Poland, America, France, the extermination of royalty, and the natural and constitutional right of universal suffrage*. In London, his lectures gained little attention, and no legal proceedings were instituted. Treating his impunity as a triumph, he published an address in two newspapers, others refusing to insert it, promising to renew his course at a future period. In the mean time, he repaired to Norwich, where he delivered a course of twenty-two lectures, neglecting at the same time no opportunity of explaining the restrictions and provisions of the late statutes, and the means still left for promoting parliamentary reform. Still unvisited by any prosecution and creating little attention, he repaired to Yarmouth, where he considered the state of society as "indeed one in which great advantage to "the cause of liberty was to be expected from any "undertaking that might tend to provoke discussion. "The principles of liberty," he said, "were in perfect "unison with the interests of almost every individual; "their reverences of the church and their worships of "the corporation excepted." He obtained a room, not in the centre of the town, but on the walls toward the sea, and began to instruct the population. The magistracy and clergy probably thought his efforts beneath their notice; but not so the crew of the frigate *l'Espégle*, lying in the roads: a considerable number of them came ashore; and, being joined by a party in the town, assailed the lecturer in his rostrum, and, after assaulting and ill-using many of them, put his audience to flight, tore his books, and, as he says,

August.
His treatment
at Yarmouth.

* Thelwall's Prospectus, sold by Symonds, London, and March, Norwich.

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attempted to secure his person : whether he was to have been murdered or only transported to Siberia, he said, was not accurately known, but would be ascertained by further investigation*. The violence thus displayed would, in almost any other circumstances, have produced a considerable sensation ; but, considering the sufferer's character and principles, the mission on which he had set out, and the whole course of his conduct, the public at large, little moved by his accounts of horror, shrieks, bludgeons, and ruffians roaring out "God save the King," with the garnish of hats, shawls, and great coats, carried as plunder on board the frigate, and lamentations over his destroyed library, consisting of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch's Lives, and Moyle's Treatise on the Lacedæmonian Government, treated the whole transaction with ridicule ; and, after a short paper war in the provincial journals, in which the transaction was explained, but could not be justified, permitted it to fall quietly into oblivion and contempt. His further attempts, and the opposition to them at Lynn and Wisbeach, are unworthy of notice†.

Trial of Stone
for high
treason.

Jan. 28, 29.

March 18.

Kyd Wake
and others.
February 20.
May 7.

Several trials for state offences occurred ; but they created feelings very short of those in former years. William Stone, charged with high treason, in connexion with his brother, John Harford Stone, the Rev. W. Jackson, and others in Ireland and France, occupied the Court of King's Bench two days: the evidence failed, and he was acquitted. Downie, whose life was forfeited by a conviction for high treason in Scotland, received a pardon, on condition of transporting himself, and never again appearing in his Majesty's dominions. The trial, conviction, and punishment of Kyd Wake have already been mentioned‡; Crossfield, Le Maitre, Smith, and Higgins, were arraigned at the Old Bailey on what was called "the pop-gun plot." Crossfield's trial was taken ; but, he being acquitted, the Attorney-General withdrew from proceeding

* Appeal, page 19.

† Thelwall's Appeal to Popular Opinion, and Particular Account of the late Outrages at Lynn and Wisbeach.

‡ Page 357.

against the others. Stannard, a shoe-maker, convicted at the Middlesex session of seditious words, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment; and Daniel Isaac Eaton, tried before Lord Kenyon, on separate indictments, for two seditious libels, was found guilty. Little sympathy was shewn on these occasions: the convicted were not adored as martyrs, nor were the acquitted elevated into the rank of heroes.

In matters of more general concern, the good which presented itself was not without an alloy calculated to occasion dissatisfaction and uneasiness. A generally copious harvest dissipated the fears which had arisen from a supposed scarcity, and quieted for a time the factious outcries which had been raised against monopoly and forestalling.

Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales was delivered, early in the year, of a Princess, who was baptized by the names of Charlotte Augusta. The general joy on this auspicious occasion was diminished by the state of the heir-apparent and his consort. For some cause undivulged, through motives of evident propriety and liberal feeling, the Prince, from the earliest period after his marriage, felt an insurmountable disgust against the Princess, and expressed a determination never to live with her as his wife. Slander, affecting the appearance of penetration, and malevolence in the disguise of liberality, assigned many reasons for this circumstance which were never sanctioned by the Prince, and which therefore do not deserve investigation. One fact is known, that his Royal Highness was extremely dissatisfied with his position: he had expected that all his incumbrances would be discharged, and that, on his marriage, he should be placed in the enjoyment of an unincumbered revenue, and undiminished dignity; but that not being granted, he effected great retrenchments.

When the Corporation of the City of London voted an address on the birth of a royal heiress, the Prince directed Lord Cholmondeley to inform them, that, being under the necessity of reducing his establishment, he was precluded from receiving the address

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1796.
June 17.

July 5, 6.

Good harvest.

January 7th.

Feb. 13th.
Birth of the
Princess Char-
lotte of Wales.
Unhappy state
of the Prince
and Princess.

January 29th.
Address of the
City of Lon-
don.

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Feb. 7th.

in a manner suitable to his situation, and therefore declined the presentation of it at Carlton House. The Court of Common Council very properly resolved, that, under such circumstances, the City could not, with a proper regard to its own dignity, suffer its compliments to be presented in any other than the usual form. The addresses of the Houses of Parliament were presented by Committees, and received in private.

In their general results the late elections were highly favourable to the minister; the numbers which had hitherto constituted his majority were not diminished, and the weight of rank, talent, and property was rather augmented. Yet his situation was not without great embarrassments; he sensibly felt the alienation of that portion of his old and valued friends which still continued desirous of peace under any circumstances; and some of his more recent allies rather preferred him to his inveterate opponents, than confided in the wisdom of his measures. This sentiment is strongly expressed by a learned and able member of that party. "With the power of Mr. Pitt," he says, "I never wish to have any connexion. I should endeavour to maintain him in power, merely from a conviction that, in consequence of the ground taken by opposition, and the distemper of the times, the cause of government in the abstract, and our excellent constitution in particular, cannot be supported but by supporting the actual minister. Happy, I believe, would it have been for Europe, if the breaking out of the French revolution had found Mr. Fox in the situation of Mr. Pitt*."

Meeting of
Parliament.
Sept. 27th.
Mr. Addington
re-elected
Speaker.

On the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Addington was re-elected Speaker, in a manner most truly flattering. Party had no share in the proceeding; Lord Frederick Campbell proposed him, Mr. Powys seconded, and General Tarleton supported the nomination with a just acknowledgment of the classical attainments, the urbanity, and the attention to the business of the House, which he had always so eminently displayed.

* Epistolary Correspondence of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke and Dr. French Laurence, p. 65.

In his speech from the throne, the King said that the steps he had taken to set on foot negotiations had, at length, opened the way to a direct communication, the issue of which must either produce the desirable end of a just, honourable, and solid peace for us and our allies, or must prove, beyond dispute, to what cause alone the prolongation of the calamities of war must be ascribed. He would immediately send a person to Paris, with full powers to treat; but Parliament must be sensible that nothing could so much contribute to give effect to the desire for peace as their manifesting that we possess both the determination and the resources to oppose, with increased activity and energy, the further efforts with which we might have to contend. This demonstration on their part was particularly called for, when the enemy had openly manifested an intention of making a descent in these kingdoms. The issue of such an enterprize could not be doubted; but it would befit the wisdom of Parliament to neglect no precautions that might either preclude the attempt, or secure the speediest means of turning it to the confusion and ruin of the enemy.

His Majesty expressed satisfaction at the increasing commerce of the country, the exertions of the navy, and the success of his arms in the East and West Indies; spoke in language of hope of the probable termination of the campaign on the Continent; and noticed the course of conduct pursued by the Court of Madrid; the blessing of Providence in an abundant harvest; the internal tranquillity of the country, and the attachment generally shewn by the people to the constitution.

An address, moved by Earl Bathurst and seconded by the Earl of Upper Ossory, was opposed only by Earl Fitzwilliam, whose whole speech was directed against the proposal to negotiate; the difficulties and dangers of which he described in clear and forcible terms. The great object of the war had been to restore order, not with regard to the internal mode of government which the enemy might choose to adopt,

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XCVIII.

1796.
October 6th.
King's speech.

Address in the
House of
Lords.

Amendment
moved by Earl
Fitzwilliam.

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but to the influence of their external designs ; but the purport of the proposed address was a recommendation to acknowledge and approve that system we had formerly opposed and reprobated. Reviewing the conduct of the Republicans toward sovereigns with whom they had made treaties, his lordship adverted particularly to Sardinia and the Pope, whom they had obliged to restore to liberty and to their effects all the persons who had been condemned to imprisonment or penalties for the propagation of their anarchical doctrines. Were their lordships prepared to submit to such indignities ? Would they endure the badge of disorder which the King of Prussia had suffered in his dominions ? Would they permit the national cockade to be worn in this country by every man whom the French Directory might choose to consider a Frenchman ? At the command of the Directory were they ready to let loose all those who had been doomed to punishment for the propagation of sedition and for attacks on the constitution ; to recall from Botany Bay the transported Jacobins ? Did ministers mean to recognize France, circumscribed within her ancient limits, or the Republic of France, bounded by the Rhine and the Alps, contrary to the system of our ancestors, who had so long struggled to confine the territories of France, and to maintain the balance of Europe ? After pointing out many evils which must result from peace under present circumstances, his lordship concluded by proposing, as an amendment, an assurance of the readiness of Parliament to support the King in defending against every aggression the dignity, rights, and interests of the British empire.

This proposal occasioned little debate ; Lord Grenville, in a short speech, stated that ministers had never maintained a republic in France to be an insuperable bar to negotiation, or that monarchy was indispensable. The state of the country was not such as to make us embrace any other than just, honourable, and solid conditions of peace. The amendment was

rejected, and the address carried without a division ; and Earl Fitzwilliam recorded his dissent in a masterly protest in ten articles.

In the House of Commons, the address was voted with unanimity ; but Mr. Fox guarded his assent against being misconstrued into approbation. He regretted that the advice he had repeatedly given, during the last three years, had not been adopted before a hundred millions of money had been spent and thousands of lives devoted to the cruel contest. He complimented ministers, rather ironically than sincerely, for having omitted the words to which they had been so bigoted heretofore, of the war having been undertaken for the " cause of religion, humanity and social order ;" nor had they repeated their constant and unfounded phrase, that " the war was just and necessary." He wished that something more expressive of the stability and security of the French government had been introduced into the speech and the address. He should have expected that his Majesty would have mentioned, specifically, that he meant to send a person to the Executive Directory of the French Republic. After many observations on the state of national prosperity, the acts of the last session, and the lessons of experience which ought to be derived from the American war, Mr. Fox spoke, in animated terms, of the brilliant and glorious achievements of the navy. What, he asked, must be the sort of that conflict, in which all our efforts could not produce to us a peace either brilliant or glorious, but we must be content with hoping for one that might be solid and permanent ?

Unwilling to create unnecessary division, Mr. Pitt said he looked with satisfaction to the concurrence expressed in the object of the address, deeming it a pledge of general unanimity, and of great exertions, if, unfortunately, the desired object should not be attained. Peace might ensue, if the enemy were disposed to accede to it on just and reasonable terms ; but, if they were still actuated by ambitious projects, we should unmask them in the eyes of Europe ; put to the proof

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1796.
Rejected.
Address in the
House of
Commons:
Mr. Fox.

Mr. Pitt.

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the sincerity of that pledge which had been given, that, if the enemy rejected peace on just and reasonable terms, the war would be supported by the unanimous voice of the nation. Mr. Fox had wasted much ingenuity in attempting to prove that the speech ought to have contained an express acknowledgment of the French government; but it ought to have occurred to him, that a passport having been sent for and granted, some communication must have taken place on that occasion, and, as the Executive Directory were satisfied with the form of communication, and the mode in which they had been addressed, it could not be necessary for him to start a difficulty where they had found none. On the part of the British ministers, no question of etiquette, no difficulty of form originating from them, would be permitted to stand in the way of negotiation. England had never shewn itself deficient in firmness and magnanimity: unrivalled in its resources, it had always been foremost in the career of honourable exertion; and it had only to maintain its accustomed vigour and perseverance to effect the restoration of general tranquillity, on terms consistent with the dignity of its own character, and the security and interest of Europe.

Threat of
invasion.

Means of in-
creasing the
navy.
Oct. 18th.

Consistently with their practice in former wars, the French professed an intention to invade this country; and the portion of the King's speech, advertising to that measure, being separately referred to a committee of the whole House, Mr. Pitt stated, that, considering the natural defence of the kingdom to be its navy, and, although that was more formidable than at any other period of history, a considerable increase ought to be procured of seamen, or even of landmen, who might, in a short time, be trained to an adequate knowledge of naval service; for which he would suggest a levy on the parishes throughout the kingdom, an expedient precisely similar to that which was practised with so much success nearly two years ago. This levy was not to be confined to the supply of the sea service; for, as great numbers in the old regiments had fallen a sacrifice to sickness and the fortune of war,

a more expeditious method must be adopted for their completion than was supplied by the ordinary mode of recruiting. He proposed therefore a levy of fifteen thousand men from the different parishes for the sea service, and for recruiting the regiments of the line. For our internal protection, he proposed a supplementary militia of sixty thousand men, not to be immediately called out, but to be enrolled, officered, and gradually trained, so as to be fit for service at a time of danger. He also suggested means of providing a considerable number of irregular cavalry. With a view to repelling invasion, this species of force should be greatly extended; as an invading enemy, who must be destitute of horses, could have no means to meet it upon equal terms. This force, to the amount of twenty thousand, he proposed to raise by a levy on those who kept horses for pleasure, in a graduated proportion; and he intimated the propriety of embodying the game-keepers, who were necessarily expert in the use of fire-arms, and who would, in case of invasion, be most serviceable in annoying the enemy.

Mr. Sheridan was the first to animadvert on the measure proposed. Unless the present Parliament, he said, was disposed to follow the example of its predecessor, by sacrificing the rights of the people to the regal prerogative, and surrendering, with the blindness of implicit confidence, the direction of public affairs to the ministers of the Crown, it was their duty to demand further information. Did ministers know whether any preparations had been making for an invasion? If not, the secret-service money must have been grossly misapplied. If they built their opinions upon such rant as Dumouriez's fixing the French flag on the Tower of London; if they were influenced by some idle speech or rodомontade of any member of the two councils, he would say that such speeches could not be called a manifestation of an intention to invade us. If any such intention were really entertained, the event would be utter ruin and confusion to the enemy. If they thought that the country would not rise against

Mr. Sheridan.

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them as one man; if they had any idea that they should be joined by any part of the inhabitants; if they supposed that they should not be overwhelmed by the mass that would be opposed to them, they and their ministers must be dupes indeed.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox, with his accustomed vehemence, deprecated the confiding of so large a force to ministers, on the mere supposition of an invasion. He disbelieved the intention; the French government was too well informed of the disposition of the people, and the situation of this country, to hope for success in such an enterprize. But, supposing they had such desperate intentions, what was the duty of Parliament? To cherish the spirit of freedom in the people; to restore to them that for which their ancestors had bled; to make the ministers really responsible. Not to be confiding in the servants of the Crown, but watchful and jealous of the exercise of their power; to restore to the people the right of popular discussion; to repeal those laws which forbad the exercise of their most invaluable rights. In one word, instead of amusing them with panegyrics upon the form, allow them to possess the spirit, of the old constitution of England.

Bills brought
in.

These invectives were not followed by any attempt to ascertain the opinion of the House; but, without a division, bills were ordered for augmenting the militia and raising provisional cavalry.

Opposition by
Mr. Curwen.
31st.

On a motion for recommitting the first of these bills, Mr. Curwen made an opposition less applicable to the measure than to the ministers. After declaring his belief that the rumour of an invasion was only a pretence to arm them with power for purposes of questionable policy, he added, "What does this moment present? a phenomenon in politics never before seen; a minister guides the helm, who has proved himself unable to direct the power of the country with vigour or effect; whose measures have heaped upon us disasters and disgrace; a minister who has imposed burthens beyond all former ministers; whose innovations on the constitution threaten its existence;

“ who has nailed up the mouths of a best majority of the nation, and established triumphantly the system of barracks in every part of the kingdom; and yet his Majesty confides; the nation is passive; and those in this House who have no confidence in him do not wish to oppose his measures.”

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Mr. Fox, adopting the same tone, said, “ Let the people not struggle against France, only to yield to the artifices of the present ministers. My advice to them is, be vigilant against the French; be vigilant also against the minister, who has brought you into this situation of danger. Beware, that while you take measures to prevent your becoming a prey to the French, you do not become a prey to the minister. I say, be vigilant against domestic as well as foreign enemies: but learn to distinguish who are your domestic enemies.”

Mr. Fox.

In a subsequent debate on the cavalry bill, the temper displayed by Mr. Fox drew from Mr. Wilberforce expressions of surprise and regret. He did not impute to him or to his friends any wish for an invasion; but he believed they would not be displeased at any small mischief befalling the country, if they could take advantage of it to get ministers removed from office*.

Nov. 2.
Mr. Wilberforce.

Mr. Sheridan termed this speech a most extraordinary and unprovoked libel. “ Good God!” he exclaimed, “ what motives does he assign, and what object does he allot to us! In contradiction to all our professions, in contradiction to all our actions, he boldly presumes that we are a set of selfish, temporizing traitors, who, without meaning to destroy, would wish the safety of the country to be endangered, for the gratification of disgracing the present ministers; of bringing a degree of disgrace upon them! Upon whom? Upon ministers already begrimed and black with infamy and disgrace; as if it were possible to aggravate the shame and indignity of the situation which they have brought on themselves.”

Mr. Sheridan.

* Mr. Wilberforce afterward said he feared he had gone too far against opposition; but a friend, to whom he communicated this opinion, observed that he had said what every body thought, but no one else had the courage to speak. *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. ii. p. 181.

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Bills passed.
Message con-
cerning Spain.

A division shewed the opposition in a very insignificant minority*, and both the bills passed without any recorded debate in the House of Lords.

In the debates on the address, discussions on the conduct of Spain were prevented by an observation that, as it was not mentioned in the King's speech, the subject was not regularly before the House. All suspense on this matter was terminated by a message from the King, accompanied with the Spanish manifestoes and the answer. Both Houses, without hesitation, voted addresses, acknowledging that nothing had been omitted on the part of his Majesty which could contribute to the maintenance of peace, and promising that no exertion should be wanting which could enable him effectually to repel this unprovoked aggression, and afford to all Europe an additional proof of the spirit and resources of the British nation.

Finance.

From many concurrent causes, it might have been apprehended that the financial business of the session would present great, if not insurmountable, difficulties; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, confident in the House and the country, presented without fear the statement of the wants of the revenue, and the mode of supplying them. In a committee of ways and means, he announced the demands at £27,647,000, of which eighteen millions were to be obtained by a loan, and five by an issue of exchequer bills. He detailed the particulars of expenditure in which the sums formerly voted by Parliament had been exceeded, and suggested the new taxes which would be necessary to provide for the interest of the loan†.

Dec. 7.
Mr. Pitt's
statement.

Mr. Grey.

Mr. Grey said he should be sorry if the eloquence with which the minister had adorned the false and deceitful statements he had made could so far blind the House as to induce them to lay on the proposed

* 140 to 30.

† In McPherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iv. p. 384, will be found the particulars and terms of the loan, and the additional taxes imposed. In this detail he observes, that only such duties as immediately affect commerce are noticed; and that many duties affecting consumption or expenditure, such as those upon houses, post-horses, stage-coaches, servants, dogs, licences for retailing sundry articles, licences for using certain articles, and a variety of stamp duties, are omitted, as not coming within the plan of his work.

burthens without inquiring how the expense was incurred, and adopting measures by which the extravagance which prevailed in the public expenditure might in future be checked. That night, the minister had thought proper to adopt, as the criterion of national prosperity, an account of the exports and imports: last year, he had inferred it from the facility of raising money; the low rate of interest at which a loan could be negotiated. At this time, he could not, with decency, hold that language, when he had it in contemplation to adopt the expedient against which he had so often exclaimed, a forced loan; and when this threat was actually contained in a letter from him to the governor of the Bank, in order to accelerate the raising of the supplies for the present year.

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1796.

Mr. Fox termed the statement of the minister one of the falsest ever brought forward to delude the people, and accompanied with political observations which, if true, must end in the downfall of the House and all its privileges, and the establishment of a dictatorship on its ruins. In support of this opinion, he reviewed not only the pecuniary transactions of the minister, the insufficiency of his accounts, and the illegitimate application of late grants, but spoke of La Fayette, of the ability of the French to maintain the relations of peace and amity, and many other general subjects, alleging that if Mr. Pitt's principles were correct, the constitution was no longer worth fighting for, and that for some particulars of his conduct he ought to be impeached. No comparison had, that night, been made between the English and the French finances. Week after week, and month after month, the French had been represented, not on the verge, but in the gulph of bankruptcy. He did not know whether they had passed the gulph or not: he hoped they had; for while they were in it, they were most dreadful enemies.

Mr. Fox.

These two intemperate speeches formed the whole debate: they were neither supported nor answered; but the resolutions proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer were carried without a division.

Resolutions
agreed to.

On the following day, when the resolutions were 8.

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 Mr. Fox on a
 grant to the
 Emperor.

reported, Mr. Fox renewed his opposition in terms even more vehement than before. His principal attack was against a grant of £1,200,000, which had been made to the Emperor without the consent of Parliament: a grant contrary to positive law, and a flagrant violation of the constitution. "When I returned home, last night," he said, "and reflected on the various subjects which had passed under discussion, I felt hurt at having appeared to give my assent to resolutions so extremely unconstitutional. I considered myself guilty of a neglect of duty, and called upon to come forward and enter my solemn protest against a measure which I regard as an infringement of the rights of the people and of the privileges of this House." On this evening he would take the sense of the House on every question, whether of supply or of ways and means; and, if he succeeded, move, on an early day, that ministers, in granting a loan to the Emperor without the consent of Parliament, had been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor. He hoped the people, in every part of the country, would express their abhorrence of the doctrine last night delivered; and that the House would be obliged (not by force, but by the voice of the country) to assert those rights which they had pusillanimously surrendered.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt began by observing on the singular manner in which the new constitutional light had broken in upon the right honourable gentleman. The declaration which had infused an alarm so deadly was made yesterday, in a way the most clear and distinct. It did not then strike him as of so much importance as immediately to call him up. After an interval of debate, it had deranged none of his calculations, nor had it deterred him from allowing the resolutions to be carried with an unanimous vote. But, after he had slept upon the subject, he discovered the dreadful tendency of the speech which he had heard with so much indifference, and was led not merely to propose a reprobation of the particular measure, and the punishment of the person by whom it was uttered, but to take revenge

by giving his negative to resolutions which had no relation to it, and to suspend the supplies which were to give confidence to the negotiations for peace or energy to the operations of war. He vindicated the application of the money as comprised in the terms of the vote of credit, which also vested a discretion in the Crown, although not absolute and independent of the control of Parliament, or exempting the minister who exercised it in an improper manner. "Whatever may be the issue of this discussion," he said, "I would rather be convicted of having granted a supply, by which the salvation of Austria was secured and the independence of Europe maintained, than be acquitted of withholding that aid by which the cause of our allies was sacrificed and the general interests of mankind compromised."

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Mr. Grey said, that if the obsequiousness and servility of the House had not encouraged the designs of the minister, they never would have seen this daring invasion of their rights; and concluded a series of bitter invectives against the whole conduct and principles of the minister, by declaring he thought it his duty to oppose, or at least suspend, the supplies. It was asked, were the supplies to be suspended—the supplies, the possession of which would afford to government so much weight and vigour? He would answer, yes; but, in reality, the proposition did not go to negative the supplies: it was only intended to suspend them till the wound given to the constitution was made whole. He therefore moved an amendment, "That the second reading be put off till the morrow;" and if the House agreed, he would then propose a resolution, that in making these advances without the consent of Parliament, the minister had been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor.

Mr. Grey.

Moves an
amendment,

This amendment was supported by Mr. Harrison and Mr. Curwen, and opposed by Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Yorke, and the Master of the Rolls. Lord Hawkesbury wished the charge to be brought forward directly; but at whatever time it might be, the House would vote the supplies that evening, because

which is
rejected.

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the money sent to the Emperor was not included in the question of the resolutions, nor was the House pledging itself at a future time to justify that expenditure.

On a division, the amendment was rejected*.

13th.
Proceedings
in the
Common Hall
of London.

In expectation of the motion announced by Mr. Fox, on a requisition signed by fifty-five of the livery, a Common Hall was assembled in the city of London, at which it was moved, and carried on a division, that their members should be instructed to move or support a motion of censure on the ministers, for having "taken upon themselves to send the money of the people of Great Britain to the Emperor of Germany, during the sitting of Parliament, without its consent."

Mr. Fox's
motion.

Fortified by this vote, Mr. Fox, on the same day, moved a resolution that the conduct of ministers, in issuing money for the service of the Emperor, and also for that of the army under the Prince of Condé, was contrary to their duty and trust, and a violation of the constitutional privileges of the House. He supported his proposition with a speech of his usual ability and force. He was, with equal ability, answered by Mr. Pitt; but the facts were known; and the arguments and authorities cited, if they possessed any interest at the time, can no longer claim that title to notice.

Observations
on the Com-
mon Hall.

The most striking feature of the debate was the vote of the Common Hall. Mr. Fox mentioned it as a decision passed by a most respectable public body; and Mr. Alderman Combe, with peculiar satisfaction, seconded the motion in obedience to the instructions of his constituents. As the representative of the first commercial city in the world, he was well acquainted with the mischief produced by the money sent to the Emperor. The discounting of the bills drawn for the purpose of remitting money to the imperial troops had swallowed up so much of the money of the Bank as to compel that great body to narrow their discounts; and British merchants were made to suffer, that the German troops might be supplied.

* 164 to 58.

His colleagues in the representation of the City severally gave their voices and opinions on the contrary side. Alderman Lushington said it was true there had been a meeting of his constituents that day, and a large majority of the Common Hall had resolved to give their instructions to support a motion for censuring ministers; but he could never consent to receive instructions to pronounce a verdict in a criminal case before he heard the defence. Alderman Curtis said he had been that day at the Common Hall, where a majority appeared in favour of the resolution to censure the minister beforehand; previous to the meeting, he knew that such would be the result; nor did he consider it as a regular expression of the sentiments of the livery; and Alderman Anderson said there was about one-tenth of the livery assembled; Mr. W. Smith made a flaming speech to them, and they immediately gave the instructions as stated by his colleague. He told them he would not vote to censure ministers until he heard their defence, and with this defence he was fully satisfied*.

Mr. Bragge moved, as an amendment, that the measure in question, although not to be drawn into precedent but upon occasions of special necessity, was, under its peculiar circumstances, a justifiable and proper exercise of the discretion vested in his Majesty's ministers by the vote of credit, and calculated to produce consequences which had proved highly advantageous to the common cause and to the general interests of Europe.

Amendment
by Mr. Bragge.

Some members, who had inclined to think a bill of indemnity necessary, receded from that opinion, deeming the defence of government complete, and the amendment was carried†.

* The triumph gained by this vote was but of short duration; in four days, notice was given of a motion of directly contrary tendency; and, in eight days, a resolution was carried that the pecuniary aid recently furnished by his Majesty's ministers to the Emperor of Germany had been productive of great advantages to Great Britain, and enabled the Emperor not only to withstand the desperate attempts of the French armies to overrun Germany, but also had given a decided and favourable turn to the war, and opened a fairer prospect of obtaining an honourable peace to Great Britain and her allies.

† 285 to 81. For the opinion of Dr. Laurence, who voted in the minority, see Epistolary Correspondence with Mr. Burke, p. 95.

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17th.
Further ad-
vances to the
Emperor
required.

Shortly afterward, his Majesty, by a message, informed the House that he was at present engaged in concerting measures with his allies to be fully prepared for the vigorous and effectual prosecution of the war, if the failure of his endeavours to effect a general peace should render another campaign unavoidable; and he conceived that it might be of the greatest importance to the common cause that he should be enabled to continue his temporary advances for the service of the Emperor.

19th.

Mr. Pitt proposed a grant, not exceeding £500,000.

Opposed.

Sir William Pulteney moved an amendment, which was supported by Mr. Fox and Mr. Nicholls, but rejected. Mr. Sheridan moved another, censuring ministers for their former advances; but this point had already been too copiously discussed to admit of novelty in argument, or to warrant an expectation of success: it had no effect, and the supply was granted.

Granted.

Difficulties at
the Bank.

In these debates, especially the latter, the financial situation of the country was the subject of much animadversion. It was stated that the large sums remitted to the Continent in specie had rendered gold and silver scarce, obstructed the course of trade, and made discounts at the Bank difficult. Whether the cause were justly assigned or not, the fact was indisputable; and it was supposed that the appearance of pecuniary distress would create great difficulties in negotiating the loan; but, on this occasion, the buoyant public spirit of the country and their confidence in the wisdom of government were strongly displayed. When the sum required and the terms were known, the Governor and Directors of the Bank subscribed a million in their corporate capacity, and the individual directors £400,000. On the two following days, moneyed men assembled in crowds; the subscription was filled; and great numbers retired, disappointed at not being in time to place their money in this, which, for the spirit displayed in the contribution and the moderation of its advantages, was called the "Loyalty Loan." To shew the real sense of the city with respect to public affairs,

Loan readily
subscribed.

4—5.

a Court of Common Council was convened at Guildhall; the Lord Mayor submitted to them a letter which he had received from Mr. Pitt; a motion was passed for a contribution of £100,000 out of the funds of the corporation; nor was the resolution impeded by information that the sum required was already subscribed, the intelligence being treated as not deserving notice. This demonstration of public spirit was not confined to the metropolis; a large portion of the loan was taken by applicants from all parts of the country; the Duke of Bridgewater tendered a draft on his banker for £100,000, but it could not be received, as the statute for making the loan was not yet passed*.

Before the Christmas recess, General Fitzpatrick moved an address to his Majesty, praying his interference in behalf of La Fayette and his associates in confinement, on the ground that their detention was injurious to his cause and that of his allies. The general's speech was an appeal to compassion, carefully prepared and highly rhetorical. He introduced the lady of La Fayette, who had voluntarily shared his imprisonment, placing her on a level with Arria, the wife of Pætus, while to the Emperor was assigned a companionship with Claudius and Nero. Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Grey, supported the motion; Mr. Pitt had spoken in opposition to it, when Mr. Wilberforce suggested an amendment, omitting the assertion that the detention of these persons was injurious to the cause of the allies. To this amendment, no less than the original motion, Lord Hawkesbury declared himself adverse.

Mr. Windham took a general review of the conduct of La Fayette during the revolution, ascribed to him, as the principal instigator of that event, the wrongs and miseries endured by millions who were suffering through his crimes, by thousands not inferior to him in rank, talents, courage, and every valuable quality, who owed to him their exile, their poverty, or their murder. Appeals to abstract feelings of humanity

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5th.
Spirit shewn in
the City,

and elsewhere.

Motion about
La Fayette.
Dec. 16th.

Mr. Windham.

* Annual Register, vol. xxxviii. p. 63; New Annual Register for 1796, p. (66); McPherson's Annals, vol. iv. p. 394.

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were the reigning practical fallacy by which questions of a simple nature were attempted to be confounded. In the number of those who had produced the French revolution, and followed it up with enormities which had surpassed all that even poets had fancied, there were many who, viewing their sufferings in naked abstraction, would excite compassion. For instance, Collot d'Herbois was condemned to Guiana, in common with vast numbers of the most learned and venerable men existing, the clergy of France; abstracting the sufferings of the wretch from the crimes that led to it, we could not but wish him rescued from such misery. We might, perhaps, like many other persons in nearly similar cases, say, " 'Tis true, Collot d'Herbois killed many thousand people; 'tis true, that when the guillotines were insufficient, and the executioners fatigued, he sent his victims, for more speedy dispatch, into a great square, where he fired upon them with cannon, and ordered in a party of cavalry to cut and trample to death the few who had escaped the guns; but 'tis also true, that the thing is passed; the men are in their graves, and cannot be brought to life again. Poor Collot! he is not the better for being in Guiana—what is the use of it—let us send for him and bring him home—how can men of feeling think of prolonging the punishment of poor Collot d'Herbois?" Did gentlemen know, or rather was it possible they should not know, that, in the opinion of all the best-informed men in France, La Fayette's conduct to the King was cruel, ferocious, and unmanly? and was it not universally known that the Queen of France often declared he was the only man she could never forgive? This was not a question of sentiment, but of prudence, policy, and general morality; and he hoped the House never would consent to do an act which would put a premium on revolution, give the sanction of example to treason, and of reward to rebellion.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox said that Mr. Windham had shewn himself to be counsel against La Fayette, and, like an advocate, had endeavoured to search through all his life

for accusations. If he was hateful to the Queen of France, the two persons confined with him were not so. La Fayette and his friends were distinguished for their moderation; it was well known that, after the tenth of October, the chief command of the armies of the Republic was offered to him. If he had accepted it and shared in all the violences that followed, he might, at this day, have been one of the Directory; and the right honourable secretary, instead of pursuing the unhappy prisoner with vengeance, might be imploring the powerful director, by an ambassador at Paris, to grant peace to England.

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Mr. Dundas thanked Mr. Windham for his very powerful speech, which had corrected all the false and delusive notions which had been stated that night, and treated the humanity of Mr. Wilberforce as somewhat too ostentatious. The amendment was adopted as part of the motion, which was then rejected on a division*.

Mr. Dundas.

Motion re-
jected.

It is said, by an American writer, whose work deserves high consideration, that, in an interview, just before the period of this motion, he solicited from M. de Thugut, the Austrian prime minister, the release of La Fayette, not authorised by the government of the United States to make the request, but on his own individual judgment, founded on narratives which he received of hardships and ill-treatment sustained by the prisoner, and because it would have a good effect in England. M. de Thugut contradicted the account of ill-treatment, denied that Madame La Fayette was detained; she might depart when she would, but must not be allowed to go and return. He would probably be discharged at the peace; but if the English would ask for him, they might, if they pleased, turn him loose in the streets of London. Austria would be very glad to get rid of him†. It is hardly necessary to observe, that, as this conversation did not take place until two days after General Fitzpatrick's motion, it could have had no influence on that debate.

* 132 to 50.

† Life of Gouverneur Morris, vol. i. p. 443.

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Mr. Morris afterward communicated it to Lord Grenville, adding his reasons for thinking that the interference of England would be a beneficial policy ; but found his arguments unavailing*.

* Same, 446. It appears that, in Oct. 1794, a spirited and well-conducted attempt was made by a Hungarian, named Balman or Boleman, and a young American named Huger, to rescue the prisoner from Olmutz. By most ingenious contrivances and much perseverance, they succeeded so far as to deliver him from the castle ; but accidents, which human sagacity could not foresee or prevent, frustrated his complete liberation and caused his recapture, and the imprisonment and great danger of his two brave and disinterested friends. See a full account in the Edinburgh Annual Register, vol. ii. p. 514, and some information, less perfect, and it is said less correct, in Ségur ; Frederick Guillaume II. Roi de Prusse, tome iii. p. 295.

CHAPTER THE NINETY-NINTH.

1796—1797.

Kehl besieged.—Huningen taken.—Conduct of Prussia.—Her two treaties with France.—Mr. Hammond sent to Berlin.—Mr. Pitt desirous to negotiate.—Feeling of France.—Parties in that country.—England attempts a negotiation.—Conduct of the French.—They attempt a negotiation with the Emperor.—Bonaparte's letter.—The Earl of Malmesbury sent to Paris.—Messages of the Directory.—Reception of Lord Malmesbury.—His proposal.—How received.—Mission to Vienna, and instructions to General Clarke.—Situation of Lord Malmesbury.—His rude dismissal.—Message on Lord Malmesbury's dismissal.—Mr. Pitt moves an address.—Mr. Erskine.—Mr. Fox.—Called to order.—Moves an amendment.—Rejected.—House of Lords.—Address opposed by Lord Guilford.—Debate.—Lord Auckland.—Lord Chancellor.—Amendment rejected.—Another moved by Earl Fitzwilliam.—Attempt on Ireland.—Frustrated.—Loss of the French.—Plan for invading England.—Its progress,—and failure.—State of opposition in England.—Publication by Mr. Burke.—Feelings of foreign powers.—The Empress of Russia.—Her death.—The Emperor Paul.—Injudicious proceedings of the Aulic Council.—State of Mantua.—Battles of Rivoli.—Defeat of Provera.

On the retreat of Moreau, the Archduke Charles wisely proposed to detach a powerful reinforcement through the Tyrol into Italy, to strengthen Alvinzi and liberate Wurmser from Mantua. Moreau had proposed an armistice, which would have facilitated

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Kehl besieged.

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Jan. 9.
Feb. 1.
Huningen
taken.

the execution of this plan; but the Aulic cabinet at Vienna, intent on the entire expulsion of the invaders from Germany, rejected the proposal; and, by their command, the Archduke commenced the siege of Kehl, which, after seven weeks in the depth of a severe winter, capitulated. The French saw with pleasure this persevering determination of their opponent, in which, beside a profuse expenditure of life, he sacrificed the time and opportunity which his own judgment would have employed so much more advantageously. Huningen, reduced to a heap of ruins, soon fell into the power of the imperialists; and the French were expelled from the dominions of the Emperor on that side of the Rhine; the people, undeceived by woful experience, had learned to estimate justly the professions of good-will; and the pretexts that war was intended against palaces, but peace to cottages, which had led many, not of the inferior class alone, to contemplate visions of glorious fraternity and republican equality. From this delusive dream they were painfully roused when they felt the enormous exactions, the violation of all social obligations, and the haughty contempt of all remonstrances which characterized the haughty, needy, and rapacious invaders.

Conduct of
Prussia.

Still no general good effect could be derived to the Emperor from the improved state of public judgment. The great aim of France was to disorganize and destroy the ancient government of the German Empire; and in this she was aided by Prussia, whose sovereign had, for some time, pursued the system of elevating his monarchy into rivalry with the imperial head, or rather, under the guise of independence, a superiority over it. For this purpose, the limits of independent states of the empire had been changed; compensation afforded to the powerful by a sacrifice of the weak, and the dominions of the ecclesiastical princes secularized. To carry their projects into effect, Frederick established a formidable army of observation, for the purpose of preventing hostile movements by either of the belligerent powers, within a limited space. As the influence of France acquired ascendancy in his ca-

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June.

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August 5.
Her two treaties with
France.

binet, he entered into two treaties with the republic; one public, by which the line of demarcation was extended considerably beyond the original project; the other, which was secret, had a decisive influence on the effect of measures in preparation against the German empire. The King of Prussia guaranteed to the republic his consent to their acquisition of the territories lying between the ancient boundaries of France and the left bank of the Rhine. Indemnities were allotted to Prussia for his portion of these provinces, to arise from the bishoprick of Munster and the country of Becklinghauser; and, as a compliment to the supposed family feeling of the King, a pretended establishment was allotted to the Prince of Orange, who was to receive the bishopricks of Bamberg and Wurtzburg, provided he would renounce the stadtholdership, and all possessions, rights, and privileges annexed. "By this treaty," a Prussian writer observes, "the cabinet of Berlin placed itself, as to the affairs of Germany, at the mercy of France.*"

Apprized, indirectly and imperfectly, of the existence of a negotiation, the British government dispatched Mr. Hammond, an able and judicious diplomatist, to Berlin, to try every method for averting arrangements, the dangerous and disgraceful nature of which was understood, although the exact purport could not be known. He did not arrive until some days after the treaties had been signed: he was coldly received by the Prussian ministers, who declared the determination of their court faithfully to observe the treaty of Basle; and his offer to admit Prussia, in quality of an armed mediator, to determine all questions of peace and war among the belligerents, received for answer that the only effect would be to involve Prussia in war. Finding that no benefit was likely to result from his mission, he departed for Vienna.

Mr. Hammond
sent to Berlin.

At the same period, it was not unknown to the British government that the Emperor, pressed by the

Mr. Pitt desirous to
negotiate.

* In this narrative, I have followed Alison, vol. iii. p. 174 to 181, consulting the authority on which he has relied, *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. p. 374 to 398.

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circumstances of the war, alarmed by the want of support from the members of the Germanic body, and not yet cheered by the events on the Rhine, which threw a gleam of sunshine over his fortunes, was departing from the vigorous system of resistance, and preparing the way for some negotiation with the French republic.

Disappointed in his endeavour to gain the intervention of Prussia, and alarmed at the accounts received, from Portuguese envoys, of the attempts made in their country by France, to which it was evident, after the treaty of Saint Ildefonso, that Spain must become subservient, Mr. Pitt felt the necessity of paving the way, if possible, toward a peace; but against such an effect, many serious difficulties presented themselves.

Feeling of
France.

The wealth and power of England, forming the principal barrier against the encroaching ascendancy of France, were viewed by her government with envy, and assailed with unwearying malevolence. As direct means could not operate, the Directory employed all measures to irritate the people of all nations against the enemy they most hated, and to destroy that unbounded commerce from which they justly considered her prosperity to flow. For this purpose, all writers under French influence incessantly represented England as the tyrant of the seas; and urged all nations to make common cause against those arrogant islanders, to wrest from them the sceptre of the ocean, and to exclude their trade from all the ports in Europe; and they set the example by rigorous prohibitions and severe penalties in their own dominions, as well as in Holland, and all others in which their sway was acknowledged.

Parties in that
country.

Still, many circumstances in France rendered the expectation of a treaty, if not easy or certain, at least not desperate. The state was torn by furiously contending factions. The Jacobins, although their attempts had been defeated and their associations repressed, were still ready for exertion, with a venom exasperated by disappointment: the royalists were not

so discouraged by their repeated disasters but that they entertained sanguine hopes, which were encouraged by the accession or avowal of new partizans in the legislature and in the army itself. The Directory, openly displaying all the luxury, venality, and abuse of authority, which had been, if not falsely, at least with exaggeration, imputed to the ancient government; unsupported by ancient title or meritorious services; were daily sinking in the public estimation, while pecuniary difficulties, undisguised profusion and speculation, the exhaustion of the resource formerly derived from the plunder of the church and the emigrants, presented a frightful spectacle of imminent danger and political feebleness. Their only security was the glory acquired in the field; and Bonaparte, their chief support in that point of reliance, was an object of jealousy and terror to the government, no less than of applause and idolatry to the people.

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In the autumn, the successes of the Archduke Charles appeared to counterbalance those of the enemy, and give animation to the Austrian cause: Jourdan was defeated; the French had evacuated Frankfort and Konigstein, and the imperialists were in possession of Freidberg, in Wittaravia. This appeared to the British government a favourable moment for renewing an attempt at negotiation: an effort was made, through M. Kainemann, the Danish Minister at Paris, to open a communication. The Directory loftily repelled this attempt, saying, they would not receive or answer confidential overtures transmitted through any intermediate channel from the enemies of the republic; but if they would send persons furnished with full powers and official papers, these might, upon the frontiers, obtain passports and proceed to Paris. Although the Danish Minister accompanied this intelligence with an opinion that the period at which a successful negotiation might be hoped for was at a great distance, Lord Grenville forwarded a flag of truce to Calais, which by the constituted authorities was transmitted to Paris, requesting a passport for an ambassador to offer direct proposals of peace. This was the position

England
attempts a
negotiation.

Sept.

25.

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Conduct of
the French.

30th.

They attempt
a negotiation
with the
Emperor.Oct. 2.
Bonaparte's
Letter.

of affairs when Parliament assembled and the King's speech was composed.

Whether actuated by the popular feeling, or influenced by the aspect of the war, the Directory no longer made a shew of stern resistance to proposals, although in reality they never intended their final success. A passport was granted; but, at the same time, their papers (and in France the public papers durst not speak any language but that directed by government) were full of declamations on the insincerity and intriguing spirit of the English government, the former overtures to Prussia, the ambitious character of our ministry, and the necessity they were under of cajoling the people into a further endurance of the war and submission to aggravated taxation, by infusing a belief that France would not listen to reasonable propositions.

At the same time, they essayed another contrivance to separate the allies, and to induce the Emperor to make a separate treaty. By their command, Bonaparte wrote to the Emperor in these terms:—"Sire, Europe demands peace. This calamitous war has already lasted too long; I have the honour to inform your Majesty that unless you send plenipotentiaries to Paris to commence negotiations for peace, the Executive Directory commands me to fill up the harbour of Trieste, and to ruin all your Majesty's establishments in the Adriatic. I have hitherto been restrained from executing this plan by the hope of not augmenting the number of innocent victims of this war. I hope your Majesty, feeling for the misfortunes with which your subjects are threatened, will restore rest and tranquillity to the world. I am, with respect, your Majesty's. BONAPARTE."

Perhaps no previous period in the modern history of civilized man can produce, under all its circumstances, a precedent for this epistle. Peace is proposed, not to be negotiated on equal or friendly terms, but to be solicited as a boon, under the impulse of insolent dictation and barbarian menaces. The writer, not a sovereign prince, but a subject military commander,

approaches the potentate hitherto regarded as the chief sovereign of Europe, in the guise of familiar equality, and, although in a situation to acknowledge that he acts under command, strips himself of every appearance of real respect, and assumes a coarse unmannerly familiarity, which good taste and good breeding would equally have prohibited to all his predecessors in arms : Marlborough would not so have addressed Louis the Fourteenth in the worst days of his evil fortunes ; and if it had been possible that an English nobleman should so far have forgotten himself, the indignant outcry of all Europe, and the severe censure of his own government, would have taught him to repent his insolent indiscretion. There have been, and still may be, persons to whom such matters appear of subordinate importance ; but those who estimate rightly the value of honour and honourable distinctions in society, will not adopt their judgment ; and if those sovereigns who, by abandoning the cause of their head, and renouncing the dignity of their station, had given facilities to this act of contumely, could justly reflect on their position, they could not fail to anticipate the abject degradation to which they must, in the course of events, be inevitably reduced.

This insolent and offensive letter was confided to an emissary named Clausel, an adjutant-general in the army, who had secret, verbal instructions to confer with the minister Thugut. Although designated as a mere courier, he was splendidly attired, with an ostentatious display of embroidery and of the republican colours ; and the letter was addressed, not to Thugut, the war minister, but to the president of the Aulic Council of War. On his arrival at Vienna, it was ^{15th.} supposed that the error in directing the letter arose from a want of information in the writer on the forms of diplomatic correspondence ; but at length it reached the hands of the Emperor, and was submitted to a meeting of all the cabinet ministers, Clausel being, in the mean time strictly guarded and prevented from all communication. As Sir Morton Eden had long before announced to the Emperor our intention to send an

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ambassador to Paris, the endeavour of the French to occasion a division of Austria and Great Britain by a separate negotiation was easily seen through; few of the advisers of the Emperor shewed a disposition abjectly to crouch before the power of France; the majority resented the disrespectful and threatening tone of the letter; and it was firmly communicated to the French government, through the Imperial minister in Switzerland, that no proposition would be received, unless the forms consecrated by the usage of nations, in diplomatic correspondence, were duly observed. Couriers were dispatched to the quarters of the Archduke, to London, Petersburg, Berlin, Basle, and Madrid, announcing the event; and Clausel, detained at first by indisposition, remained some time at Vienna by desire of Thugut*.

The Earl of
Malmesbury
sent to Paris.

When a passport from France was obtained, the negotiator selected by government was the Earl of Malmesbury, whose experience, talents, and temper would have led to an expectation of the happiest results; if it could have been supposed that the time for making peace had yet arrived†. Against such a hope, every act of the French government furnished a strong presumption. In announcing to the two councils the approaching arrival of an ambassador, the Directory openly denounced the insincerity of the British government, and treated the transaction as a contrivance of the cabinet of St. James's to fabricate calumnies against the French, to delude the people, and to obtain assent to taxes. In a second message, the same topics were repeated, with the addition that England had proposed to re-open the course of exchange with Holland, and to license the exportation

Oct. 10.
Messages of
the Directory.

* *Homme d'Etat*, tome iv. p. 11 à 21; *Œuvres de Bonaparte*, tome i. p. 164.

† Of the selection of this nobleman, Mr. Wilberforce (*Life*, vol. ii. p. 170) gives this anecdote:—"I have been resenting to Pitt the idea of employing Jackson to negotiate with France; every body feels it, but few dare tell Pitt any such thing. People will not so much believe him in earnest in the treaty as if he sent a more important character. The Speaker agrees with me, that some important man should go; and even offered to go himself. These remonstrances at last proved effectual: Jackson was quite held a proper man for his embassy, and Pitt would scarce hear it questioned; but now it is thought ridiculous to hold him fit, and Lord Malmesbury is to go."

of merchandize to that country, and to what she affectedly persisted in calling Austrian Flanders; but they recommended efficacious precautions, to proscribe, until peace, the sale and consumption of British merchandize in any part of the republic.

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Under these inauspicious circumstances, Lord Malmesbury arrived in Paris. The state and splendour he displayed were flattering to whatever remained of the ancient taste, and he was hailed with general acclamation of the people throughout his progress and in the capital itself. He was accompanied by Lord Leveson Gower, and Mr. Ellis, who had acted as secretary to Lord St. Helen's at the Hague. Charles Delacroix, the minister for foreign affairs, was entrusted by the Directory to conduct the negotiation; and, in every part of the transaction, a spirit of insincerity, mixed with arrogance and rudeness, marked the acts of the Republic.

Reception of
Lord
Malmesbury.

At the first interview, after the formal exhibition of their authorities, Lord Malmesbury disclosed the outline of a plan of pacification; its basis was a restitution of conquests; France was to surrender to our allies a portion of the territories acquired during the war, and Great Britain in like manner to give up those which she had obtained. This proposal on the part of England was frank and liberal; for she had no restitutions to expect, as from her France had made no capture; while, on the other hand, her conquest of French colonies had been extensive and important. As it was necessary to obtain explicit authority from the allies of Great Britain to proceed on these points, the French government employed the period of delay in demonstrating ill-will and creating difficulties. In their answers to this first proposition, they did not hesitate to assert that the British ministry meant merely to temporize, for purposes of convenience and state necessity, and that the ambassador had secret instructions neutralizing his ostensible powers. Lord Malmesbury, with great propriety, observed, that it was beneath his sovereign to reply to such odious suspicions, and reiterated that his express commands

24th.
His proposal.

26th.
How received.

27th.

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were, not to admit any proposition tending to sever the interests of Great Britain from her allies.

It was not convenient to the French government, consistently with their views of military and diplomatic arrangement, or in opposition to the strong desire of the people for peace, suddenly to terminate the negotiation; and therefore they protracted it for a considerable time, omitting no opportunity to calumniate and insult the British government and its ambassador, hoping to irritate him beyond the bounds of strict forbearance, or at least to make both the government and the negotiator odious in the eyes of the nation. In contempt of all established usage, the confidential memorial of Lord Malmesbury to Delacroix was published, by authority, in the official journal, and daily libels were promulgated from the same source against the negotiation and the ambassador, in which his public conduct was decried, his supposed secret views displayed, and his personal character basely calumniated. These publications did not pass without strong animadversion; but the hand of power was speedily stretched forth, and all animadversions of this kind effectually restrained.

Mission to
Vienna and
instructions to
General
Clarke.

Nov. 16th.

Pressed by internal difficulties, and sensible, after the reverses they had sustained in Germany, that their only hope rested on the army of Italy, and that any reverse in that quarter must be fatal to their interests, the Directory, no longer affecting the lofty and imperious style unsuccessfully used by Bonaparte, dispatched General Clarke to Vienna with minute and prolix instructions to propose measures for facilitating a peace. His authorities were extremely narrow; in fact, he was rather sent as an accredited spy than as a negotiator; his principal duty being to study and make reports on the passions, interests, and personal character of the influential persons at court. It was laid down as a principle that no cession of any advantages gained by republican valour in Germany or in Italy could be assented to; and he was not to stipulate, but to insinuate the spoil, plunder, and usurpation of helpless, though independent states, as

a compensation to the Emperor for those territories which the French could not restore without sacrificing their new friends in Italy, and foregoing the benefits they hoped to derive from that beautiful country when delivered from the Austrian influence. To render this arrangement easy, ecclesiastical states were to be secularized, dominions surrendered to potentates who had no claim on them, the ties of allegiance and the obligations of loyalty severed, ancient forms of government abolished, and, among other changes, the Elector Palatine was to be endowed with the principal territories of the Church, and to receive as his title, the King of the Romans. In all these operations, the will of the people was never to be consulted; but it was assumed that it would be very agreeable to them, and secure the possessions of the French: it might, to be sure, be displeasing to the Emperor; but the way to assure its adoption would be to conciliate Prussia by large indemnities; and that done, all other powers would be reduced to silence. In the conclusion of these instructions, the true motive of Clarke's mission was clearly developed. He was chiefly to aim at persuading the Emperor that, notwithstanding the pretended advantages offered by England in compensations, the interests of that country were opposed to his, and that the house of Austria would obtain more, and with greater ease, by treating with the Republic alone.

General Clarke was also provided with a letter from the Directory to the Emperor, pointing out the state of affairs, deprecating the further effusion of blood, displaying the hazards of a new campaign, and inviting a suspension of arms, and a general convocation of plenipotentiaries to treat of peace, to be open to all the belligerent powers, in proportion as they should shew themselves eager for the attainment of its great object. This letter is free from the imperious and threatening tone which distinguished that of Bonaparte; but it is observed that its low, official style*

* Style bureaucratique is the word used by the author from whom the ob-

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Situation of
Lord
Malmesbury.

December.

19.
His rude
dismissal.

evidently denoted it to be the production of a cabinet of lawyers, incapable of imparting to such a document the requisite character of elevation and dignity.

Lord Malmesbury, residing in Paris, could not be supposed, nor was it perhaps desired that he should be, unacquainted with this mission and its objects. The Directory had never intended to effect a treaty of peace with England, but to gain, by the appearance of such an intention, the advantage of knowing the course of events, and the variations they might produce in the minds of other powers. The negotiation, therefore, if so it may be called, was protracted to a period of two months. The French, with great acuteness, peremptorily demanded distinct propositions from our minister, while they resolutely abstained from making any themselves; they would not even formally acknowledge the principle as a basis of negotiation. After any evasions, Lord Malmesbury obtained a definite interview with Delacroix, and, in a long conversation, all the interests of the belligerent powers were amply discussed; it terminated, as had been foretold, in a declaration that the French were restrained by their constitution from alienating the Austrian Netherlands, which had been decreed a portion of the republic, one and indivisible. The ambassador vainly opposed to this assumption cogent reasons; he received, for his only answer, a note, in terms as little allied to politeness as could be conceived. "The executive Directory will not listen to any proposition contrary to the constitution, the laws and treaties by which the Republic is bound; and notice is given to Lord Malmesbury to retire from Paris, with all persons who have accompanied or followed him, within eight and forty hours, and immediately afterward to leave the territories of the French Republic*."

On this event, the King sent, with a message to

servation is derived; it is not properly French, nor capable of being translated into English.—*Homme d'Etat*, tome iv. p. 59.

* Chiefly from *Homme d'Etat*, tome iv. page 1 to 111; also Lacrételle, Thiers, and other historians; the papers laid before Parliament, and the periodical publications and collections.

both houses of Parliament, copies of the papers respecting the negotiation. Mr. Pitt moved an address, by which, after expressing their concern at the disappointment of his endeavour to effect the restoration of peace, and the manner of terminating the negotiation, they declared that, as the continuance of war could be imputed only to the unjust and exorbitant views of the enemy, it was incumbent on them to afford their most firm and zealous support in measures calculated to bring this great contest to a safe and honourable issue.

In proposing this motion, the minister derived consolation from the circumstance that the aggression had uniformly been on the side of the enemy, and that nothing had been wanting, on the part of this country, to restore a secure and permanent peace, and the secure and permanent possession of its concomitant blessings. He reviewed the course of the negotiation, to show that our propositions had been candid and our desire of peace sincere. Of the conduct of the enemy he spoke from the admissions of the Directory in an official message to one of their councils. The only pay of their troops, it said, were the horrors of nakedness and famine; their state contractors, their judges, and all their public functionaries received no part of their salaries; the roads were impassable, the public hospitals and general interests of charity totally neglected; nothing, in short, remained in a state of organization but murder and assassination. Could this be the time for Europe to prostrate itself at the feet of France—suppliantly to bow the knee and ignominiously to receive its law? He described the difficulties and delays that had arisen from the refusal of the French to permit the proper and usual arrangement of preliminaries by means of couriers. While these preliminaries were in a course of being settled, Lord Malmesbury's presence was barely endured, and the frequency of his dispatches was the subject of animadversion; but, no sooner were the preliminaries settled, the period for discussion arrived, the personal presence of an ambassador particularly necessary, and when he had announced that he was prepared to enter

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Message on
Lord
Malmesbury's
dismissal.
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Mr. Pitt
moves an
address.

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into discussion upon the official memorials containing his projet, then he was ordered to quit Paris, and leave the negotiation to be carried on by the means of couriers. Such was the precise form in which a studied insult, refined and matured by the French Directory, was offered to his Britannic Majesty.

He displayed the chicane resorted to by the French government in the whole transaction, and shewed that their refusal to treat on the restoration of the Austrian Netherlands, or to admit of any proposition contrary to their constitution or to their treaties, was repugnant to the established principles of the law of nations. When, in the course of war, any nation acquires new possessions, they do not become property until the end of the war. The treaties they might have entered into with other governments were not and could not be known to that of England. "How is it possible for this country to know what secret articles there may be in the treaty between France and Holland? what the Dutch may have ceded to France, or whether France may not have an oath in heaven never to give up such territories? Who can know but her treaty with Spain contains some secret article, guaranteeing to the latter the restitution of Gibraltar, and whether the performance of such engagements may not be included under the pretext now held out? In fact, the question is not how much you will give for peace, but how much disgrace you will suffer at the outset; how much degradation you will submit to as a preliminary? In these circumstances, then, are we to persevere in war with a spirit and energy worthy the British name and character? Or are we, by sending couriers to Paris, to prostrate ourselves at the feet of a stubborn and supercilious government? I hope there is not a hand in his Majesty's councils that would sign the proposals, that there is not a heart in this house that would sanction the measure; and that there is not an individual in the British dominions who would act as the courier."

Mr. Erskine.

Mr. Erskine was the first to oppose the address; and he had made some progress in noticing the

terms which might have been obtained, when a negotiation with M. Chauvelin was proposed; terms, which if the minister could now obtain, he would be worshiped as a god;—but when he had proceeded to this point, indisposition prevented him from concluding his argument.

Mr. Fox declared that, for the sake of peace and of Great Britain, which ministers, by their imprudent counsels and infatuated policy, seemed determined to push to the last verge of ruin, he was thus, unexpectedly, called upon to address the House. His whole speech abounded in reflections, in the same tone. France had been described as on the verge of, or in, the gulph of bankruptcy; sometimes, as in both situations at the same time. If Mr. Pitt had some reason to suspect the sincerity of the Directory, had not they at least equal ground to entertain the same doubts with respect to him. After every epithet of reproach had been exhausted by ministers, to vilify their characters, was it to be expected that they would readily listen to terms of peace dictated by those ministers, except they were brought into a state of necessity and submission, which precluded them from any alternative, and compelled them to an unconditional compliance with any pacific proposition that might be presented to their acceptance? “When Lord Malmesbury, in addressing the French minister, so often brings forward his profession of high consideration, I cannot but smile, when I recollect that Lord Auckland was made a peer (for I know no other reason for his advancement to that dignity) merely because he declared that the men who are now addressed in such respectful terms, ‘ought to be put under the sword of the law;’ and because he denounced them as miscreants and traitors to all Europe.”

At great length, he insisted that the basis produced by Lord Malmesbury was futile, illusory, and unmeaning; framed to disgust the French in the first instance, and at once to get rid of the negotiation. And if the French, who must have felt themselves mocked by this treat-

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ment, and who must have been more and more assured of the insincerity of our ministers, had thought proper to stop all further proceedings, would they not have been fully justified? Undoubtedly ministers expected that the French would resent the insult, and break off the negotiation in its outset. Thus they hoped to obtain easy credit for pacific intentions, and to throw upon the enemy the odium of determined hostility, and an unreasonable rejection of the preliminary basis of negotiation. All the subsequent proceedings he described as a series of frauds and fallacies on the part of government; an experiment to ascertain what terms of insult and humiliation could be found to rouse the pride of the Directory, and inevitably to provoke rejection.

Proceeding in this strain, Mr. Fox, as usual, decried and stigmatized the allies of England for every part of their conduct, and introduced some sarcastic reflections on the possession and loss of Corsica. Heated by his argument, he went so far as to say, that Parliament had not and did not deserve the credit which it once had.

Called to
order.Moves an
amendment.

On this, Mr. Yorke called to order, and moved that the words should be taken down; the Speaker interfered; Mr. Fox, having explained, was allowed to proceed, and, in conclusion, moved an amendment, declaring that the House sincerely deplored the necessity they felt of declaring that they thought ministers were not sincere in their endeavours to procure the blessings of peace, so necessary for this distressed country. They could not help lamenting the rashness and injustice of ministers, whose long-continued misconduct had produced this embarrassing situation, by advising his Majesty, before the blessings of peace had been interrupted, to refuse all negotiation for the adjustment of the differences then subsisting, although the Netherlands, now the main obstacle to the return of tranquillity, were not then considered by the French republic as a part of their territory, but the annexation of them solemnly renounced.

Rejected

Considering the manner in which this amendment

was urged, and the many declarations of Parliament which it tended to reverse and contradict, neither its rejection nor the greatness of the majority could occasion surprise*.

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In the upper House, Lord Grenville moved the same address; and Mr. Fox's amendment was proposed by the Earl of Guilford, who represented the present as a day of disgrace and affliction; of disgrace to the King's ministers, and affliction to his Majesty's dominions. Such a mass of criminal imbecility, as the papers on the table exhibited, he never witnessed. Every principle upon which ministers had set out had been retracted; every pretension which they had held out to the country surrendered; every fact which they had imposed upon the easy confidence of their lordships, falsified.

House of
Lords.

Address
opposed by
Lord Guilford.

The Earl of Derby and the Duke of Bedford supported the amendment, pathetically describing the state of the labouring poor. In many of the manufacturing towns, they had only half their former wages; and in Birmingham four thousand houses were uninhabited, and one-fourth of the remainder unable to pay the assessed taxes. Observations on the insincerity of ministers in the proposed negotiations were urged, and it was said that they had acted on a principle of augmenting the power of great states at the expense of the weaker; by consenting to such a principle, Europe would sink into a miserable labyrinth of despotic arrogance. The Earl of Abingdon added, that he thought the conduct of the French Directory open and manly, while that of our ministers was very much the reverse.

Debate.

In a manly and powerful oration, Lord Auckland declared that, although he had a strong dislike to the negotiation, he had acquiesced in it, because he thought it, under all the circumstances of the time, an experiment necessary to be made, for the purpose of demonstrating to these kingdoms, and to all the world, that the prolongation of the calamities of war ought

Lord
Auckland.

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to be ascribed to those from whose madness and wickedness the war had originated. Under that impression, repugnant and painful as it was to him to send a plenipotentiary to Paris, to court the fraternal embraces of the Directory, and to say, in the words of Antony to the assassins of Cæsar,

“ Let each man render me his bloody hand,”

he had acquiesced in the negotiation; believing, however, on the one hand, that it would not tend to accelerate the return of peace; but confident, on the other, that, by the wisdom of his Majesty's government, it would not be detrimental either to the interests or to the honour of the British empire. By what he knew of the constitution of the pretended republic of France, he could discern that it was incompatible with a state of peace. That constitution had no resemblance of a republic, but was, in truth, a most odious aristocracy. Its leaders had no security in their possession of unparalleled power, no safety in their consciousness of unparalleled crimes, but in the violent predicament of war. He was not surprised at the failure of the negotiation; he was only puzzled to explain why the Directory had thought it expedient to precipitate the conclusion, and to tear off so abruptly the thin veil of moderation which the distresses and wishes of the French provinces had forced them to assume. He felt the horrors of war as powerfully as any one; but it was unmanly and useless to complain, when there was no remedy within the grasp or reach of our faculties. To what, then, were we to look? To the necessity forced upon us: to the continuance of the war, manfully and with redoubled energy; till our implacable enemy should be brought to the position which alone could give to us an honourable and solid peace. He was aware that some persons might impatiently exclaim, that the downfall of the French finances had too long been predicted: that it had been looked for in vain week after week, month after month, and year after year. To such persons he

would reply, that if the respective predicaments of the two countries were unhappily reversed; if the navigation, commerce, and revenues of France were prosperous, and those of Great Britain involved in universal bankruptcy, still we should have no alternative as to our line of conduct; the enemy had left us no choice between war and utter perdition.

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The Lord Chancellor considered, as a circumstance unparalleled, an amendment brought forward at the important crisis of a negotiation for peace abruptly put an end to (no matter how), and that circumstance communicated to Parliament from the throne, the apparent object of which amendment was, to declare that the House was determined to withhold their support to his Majesty in the continuance of the war. In detail, it was no other than an exaggeration of the power of the enemy, encouraging to them, and depressing to the interests of this country. He denied that the memorial presented to the Directory was of a sophistical nature; for it contained an ingenuous declaration of what England was disposed to surrender, and what to demand on behalf of her allies? The whole conduct and language of the French discovered a determination to avoid all discussion. Having been personally appealed to, whether bankruptcies were not daily increasing, he declared that in the present, the number was more than one-fifth less than the average of the last twelve years. The manufactories were more flourishing than at former periods, nor was there any year in which the quantity of English goods exported was greater.

Lord
Chancellor.

This amendment, being rejected by a majority greater in proportion than that in the House of Commons*, Earl Fitzwilliam moved one in a directly contrary sense, giving his Majesty credit for a sincere and anxious desire to obtain a secure, permanent, and honourable peace. He declared that he would never consider the possessors of the power in France (under whatever name or external form of government that

Amendment
rejected.
Another
moved by
Earl
Fitzwilliam.

* 86 to 8.

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power might be exercised) as capable of maintaining the ordinary relations of peace and amity, until they should have disclaimed in conduct, no less than in words, that system which, having emanated from the original principle of the French revolution, still continued to operate in a more dangerous, because in a more specious, form, and which, in its address to his Majesty, in January 1794, this House described as a system disposing arbitrarily of the lives and property of a numerous people, violating every restraint of justice, humanity, and religion, equally incompatible with the happiness of that country, and with the tranquillity of all other nations. After a short discussion, this amendment was negatived, and the address voted without a division.

Attempt on
Ireland.

One motive which actuated the enemy in appearing to tolerate a mock negotiation, became apparent immediately after the dismissal of Lord Malmesbury. Menaces of an invasion of the British dominions had long been made, whether through overweening confidence in their own power and fortune, expectation of co-operation from the disaffected in Great Britain and Ireland, or for the purpose of gratifying the hatred so generally infused against the English name, or the concurrence of all these causes, the public mind was prepared, and the experiment had become necessary. Their first effort was on Ireland, to which they were invited, as well by general observation on the state of the country, as by particular communications from some of the leaders of sedition and rebellion. In this operation they were to be aided by the Dutch, and preparations were made in the French ports for the equipment of twenty-five sail of the line and fifteen frigates, with sloops and transports for the conveyance of twenty-five thousand men, while commensurate exertions were made in the Texel. These circumstances were not unknown to the British government; but the object of the expedition was undisclosed, and conjecture destined it to India, to the West Indies, to Portugal, or, as the event showed more correctly, to Ireland. To frustrate the plans of the enemy; the channel fleet

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Dec. 15.

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Frustrated.

was divided into two squadrons; one under Admiral Colpoys, to cruize off Brest; to attack them, if possible, on their coming out, and to send intelligence of their movements. Another fleet remained at Spithead, to act as occasion might require; while a third, under Admiral Duncan, closely blockaded the mouth of the Texel, on the shores of which a considerable army was encamped. Two days before the departure of Lord Malmesbury from Paris, the French armament under Admiral Bouvet sailed from Brest, watched by Sir Edward Pellew; but from their course he was not able to ascertain their destination. From the tempestuous state of the weather, observations were rendered additionally uncertain; and orders, communications and reinforcements, were delayed or frustrated. Suspense was terminated by the arrival of a portion of the Brest fleet, which anchored in Bantry Bay, after losing one man of war, which foundered in getting out of their own harbour. Storms which obstructed the arrival of the English would have prevented the French from attempting any landing, had they been prepared to effect it; but the squadron was ill provided with stores and victuals; General Hoche was appointed to command; but the frigate in which he sailed, with his staff, was separated from the fleet in a gale, and prevented from joining the expedition.

Far from meeting the encouragement they had been taught to expect, the French found the population vehemently determined to resist them. The Lord Lieutenant stated* that the best spirit was manifested, both by the regulars and the militia. Arrangements made for their aid and comfort, during their march, were rendered unnecessary by the spontaneous contributions and exertions of the people, not of the superior class alone, but of those who resided in districts where neither the example nor the influence of the great or the opulent could be brought to excite them. "Notwithstanding the extreme rigour of the season, the southern roads were covered with troops, and an

* Dispatch to the Duke of Portland, 18th January, 1797.

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"active peasantry, vieing with each other in clearing the roads, and administering to the troops whatever comforts their scanty means and bountiful hearts enabled them*." The French military were anxious to be put on shore, to try their fortune, whatever might be their discouragements; but, in the absence of General Hoche, the admiral refused to comply; and, apprehending the approach of the channel fleet, quitted Ireland, and regained the harbour of Brest.

31.
Loss of the
French.

The French have represented this expedition, sufficiently alarming without doubt to the British government, as having been attended with no loss but a single vessel†; but it appears that four sail of the line and eight frigates were in reality sunk, destroyed, or captured. One of these, *Les Droits de l'Homme*, of seventy-four, being separated from the rest of the fleet in their return home, was attacked by Sir Edward Pellew, in the *Indefatigable* of forty-four, and the *Amazon* of thirty-eight guns, off Ushant, and, after a tremendous engagement, driven on shore near the Penmarks and utterly lost; the *Amazon* shared her fate, but the crew were saved‡.

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Jan. 13.

Plan for
invading
England.

As a sequel to the invasion of Ireland, or rather a portion of the plan, an expedition was prepared, not less atrocious in its conception than ridiculous in its failure, for the invasion of England. A body of about twelve hundred outcasts, galley-slaves and malefactors, was collected at Brest, dignified with the title of *La seconde légion des Francs*, and headed by Colonel Tate. His instructions were signed by Hoche; but whether they emanated entirely from himself or from his government, is not ascertained. Colonel Tate was told that his troops would be all resolute and determined men. The destruction of Bristol was a point of the greatest importance; and, to accomplish it, he was to ascend the river

* Plowden, vol. ii. p. 289.

† Lacrételle, tome xiii. p. 301.

‡ Rose, p. 308. For the general account of the expedition, the authorities already cited, all histories in general; and a detailed account of the wreck of *Les Droits de l'Homme*, and the sufferings of those on board, is given by Lieutenant Elias Pipon, who was a prisoner on board. *Annual Register*, vol. xxxix. page *127.

Avon at night-fall, and his men, being well supplied with combustibles, were to set fire to the town on the windward side, so as completely to reduce it to ruin ; with the ports, the docks, and the shipping, which would strike terror and amazement into the very heart of the capital of England. Three objects were principally in view. To raise an insurrection in the country : to interrupt and embarrass its commerce ; and to prepare and facilitate the way for a descent, by distracting the attention of government. The poor were to be incited by the distribution of money and liquor, by invectives against the rich, and particularly the clergy and officers in the army and navy, and by plundering attacks on their property. The commerce was to be interrupted by breaking down bridges, cutting dykes, ruining causeways, and plundering convoys of subsistence, public stages and waggons, and even private carriages ; and cutting off the supplies of provisions from principal towns ; burning all vessels and boats on rivers and canals, which would throw out of employ a great number of workmen, who would in consequence be disposed to join in any project by which they could gain subsistence. The success of the expedition would also be promoted by burning the arsenals in the sea ports, stopping government couriers, and seducing the troops to desert. Colonel Tate was further informed, that, by combined boldness and intelligence, he might easily possess himself of Chester and Liverpool, which he was to ruin by burning the magazines and filling up the ports ; he would be joined by two other columns of French troops from the counties of York, Northumberland, and Durham, and, if compelled by superior force to quit the country bordering on the channel, he was to send information to Hoche in Ireland, who would execute a diversion in his favour*.

If these documents were not sufficiently authenticated, they might be taken for fiction or burlesque ; and such a supposition would receive much confirma- Its progress.

* Annual Register, vol. xxxix. p. *137, *139.

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Feb. 22.24th.
and failure.

tion from the conduct of the person to whom they were addressed. Two frigates, a corvette, and a lugger, with these twelve hundred malefactors on board, sailed from Brest, to conquer, plunder, and revolutionize England; they appeared in the Bristol Channel, but, instead of pursuing their instructions, and burning the city by night, they changed their course, stood over to the Welch shore, and cast anchor in Fishguard Bay, on the coast of Pembrokeshire. For one day, and while the country was unprepared, they spread considerable alarm; they landed, and, according to the predatory principles in which they had long been exercised, plundered in every direction, but are not charged with any act of cruelty. A body of 400 fencibles, with 200 militia and 60 yeoman cavalry, having been assembled under Lord Cawdor, and supported by a host of countrymen armed at random with implements of husbandry and similar weapons, damped the ardour of the invaders*. Colonel Tate sent a flag of truce, proposing a capitulation, to save the unnecessary effusion of blood: Lord Cawdor would accept only of an unconditional surrender: the Colonel agreed, and his troop, laying down their arms, and becoming prisoners of war, exchanged the labours of the French galley for the idleness of an English prison ship. The two frigates which brought them were captured in their way to Brest by Sir Harry Neale and Captain Cooke, in the *San Fiorenzo* and the *Nymph*. So ended this absurd expedition, which was reprobated even by the French in the Council of Five Hundred, as contrary to the constitution, injurious to the national honour and the brave defenders of the country, and a breach of the law of nations. An inquiry was demanded; but the Directory instituted no proceeding—happy that such a transaction should fall into oblivion†.

* It may serve to illustrate the old observation, that great events may flow from small causes, to state that the apprehensions of the invaders were much increased by the appearance of a supposed military force; it was, in fact, only a collection of Welch women, in their scarlet cloaks and beaver hats, who had been drawn by curiosity to the sea-side.

† Annual Register, vol. xxxix. p. 256, *134.

In the late debates in Parliament, three different shades of opposition, or at least dissent from the measures of ministers, shewed themselves; the old, irreconcilable party, who censured every act of government, and vindicated or palliated every act of the French, from the first outbreak of the revolution: a more moderate party, who thought with Mr. Wilberforce that, although the war had been justly begun, it had been too long continued, and that religion, humanity, and policy, alike dictated peace on any terms: and a third party, represented by Earl Fitzwilliam in the Lords, and Mr. Windham in the House of Commons, who treated with disdain and abhorrence any thought of attempting to negotiate with the present holders of power in France. Politicians of this class could not suddenly attain popularity, or gain a favourable hearing from the deliberative councils of the nation: but their efforts had great effect in reanimating those who were inclined, from the contemplation of continued misfortune, to sink into despondency; and checking the presumption of those who triumphed in the accomplishment of a portion of their ill-intended predictions. Mr. Burke, by publishing "Two Letters on the Proposals of Peace with the Regicide Directory of France," materially aided the efforts of this last-mentioned party, cleared the minds of many who had suffered themselves to be swayed by the arts and boldness displayed on the opposite side, and established on a firm basis his own reputation as an accomplished statesman and a sagacious political prophet. Besides refuting the arguments advanced in favour of the proceedings of the French, he shewed that their present state, which their favourers represented as the end of their revolution, was but the beginning of a series of revolutions, affecting not France alone, but all the countries in Europe; and that the war, which ministers and their friends had pronounced to be of short duration, must necessarily last many years, and be productive of tremendous political changes.

As to the present moment, that question was not to be decided by the arguments of debaters, or the

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State of
opposition
in England.

Publication
by Mr. Burke.

Feelings of
foreign powers.

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The Empress
of Russia.

writings of statesmen; the compacts of cabinets, and the results of military operations, were to produce their effect, and in these both prudence and fortune favoured the French. The Empress of Russia, appearing at length to arouse to a sense of the danger with which the successes of France and the conduct of some continental powers menaced all established authorities, and relieved from all fears with respect to her acquisitions in Poland, was desirous to shew herself the liberator of Europe, the supporter of the balance of power, and the restorer of social order. Her notes to the court of Berlin were conceived in terms of asperity: she intimated her suspicions of the secret views which influenced the King, as they appeared in his manner of conducting the war, concluding a separate peace, and forming the line of demarcation; and that his real intentions were developed by his incorporation of Brandenburg, Nuremberg, and other cities, into his dominions; a proceeding which strongly affected the Germanic body in general, and its head in particular. These subjects were also noticed in the dispatches of the Court of Vienna; and it was known that, in conformity with her own political system, and to prevent a peace injurious to the Emperor, Catherine was on the point of concluding an arrangement with the Courts of Vienna and London for sending an army of sixty thousand men into the imperial dominions; while a competent force was maintained in readiness to operate as a check upon any enterprize of Prussia; and orders had been given for a levy throughout her dominions, which would have produced one hundred and fifty thousand men. Such an exertion would, in all human probability, have effected a total change in the aspect of continental affairs; but the anxieties of France, and the alarms of Prussia, were terminated by the sudden death of the Empress. Paul, her son and successor, had been kept during her lifetime at a distance from the discussions of the cabinet; his mind and intentions were little known; but he soon shewed a determination to adopt a mode of conduct totally different from that in which his mother had been en-

Her death.

The Emperor
Paul.
Nov. 10th.

gaged. His ministers gave assurances, equally positive, to every court, that the connexions subsisting between them and Russia should be scrupulously maintained; but the treaty, which was on the eve of execution, was never completed; Prussia received assurances as cordial as any other power; the new Emperor avoided all interference; and some of his early acts shewed a disposition to court popular opinion, by reversing some of the wrongs done by his predecessor: in particular, he restored to liberty fourteen thousand Polish captives and exiles, while Kosciuszko, Niewzewiez, Potocki, and many distinguished persons of that country, peculiarly obnoxious to Catherine, were not only restored to freedom, but reinstated in their property, on a mere promise to live peaceably*.

In the prosecution of the war, the vigour, energy, and skill of Bonaparte were strongly contrasted by the want of those qualities in his adversaries. While the Archduke Charles, contrary to the dictates of his better judgment, was doomed to consume time and strength in the reduction of two fortresses, he had the mortification of seeing the daily increasing probability of ill success to the arms of his country. "Through the limited conceptions of the Aulic Council," an intelligent author observes: "the plan which had been previously chalked out for Wurmser was reproduced almost in the same proportions and on the same scale, without any material improvement. When we reflect on instructions so little adapted to the importance of the occasion, we are tempted to think that they were dictated by a mediocrity of talent proceeding from stupidity, or, perhaps, used as a mask to conceal treachery†." From all the events which occurred, it would seem that this fatal cause prevailed, in no considerable degree, in the Imperial councils and armies. It is not to be supposed that the great men, who guided the affairs of state, were desirous to sacrifice their country to its enemies; but, when strong differences of opinion prevail in a cabinet

Injudicious
proceedings of
the Aulic
Council.

* *Homme d'Etat*, tome iii. page 461; tome iv. pp. 121, et seqq.

† *Ibid.* tome iv. page 43.

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State of
Mantua.

on the necessity of peace and the means of prosecuting war, statesmen often become so adverse to the plans of their opponents, that they rejoice in, or even promote, their failure: the discord prevailing in the council extends itself to the deliberations of the military, and if among them one can be found sufficiently treacherous and wicked to make disclosures to the enemy, the commander, however brave and sagacious, is deprived of all hope of success.

So strict was the blockade of Mantua, that no access to any part of the country was left, and the distresses of the garrison were formidably increased. When Wurmser threw himself into that city, the armed force amounted to nearly twenty-six thousand men; but, as the blockade continued, it was diminished by death and by contagious diseases, which confined nearly seven thousand in the hospitals; provisions became exceedingly scarce, although the general caused the greater part of the horses to be killed and salted for a supply. Alvinzi, who had by reinforcements been placed at the head of an army numerically superior to his opponent, and informed of the impossibility that, for want of sustenance, the garrison could hold out beyond the end of January, made bold and judicious attempts for its relief. He advanced with the main body from Bassano to Rovoredo, and, by his command, General Provera took from the Republicans the posts of Casella, Mecla, and San Salvaro, obliging them to retire to Bevilaqua, and subsequently to Porto Legnano; and he pursued his progress to the banks of the Adige, where, to reach Mantua, he must force a passage. Bonaparte was at this period at Bologna; but, when informed of the state of affairs, hastened to the Adige, where, having enabled Augereau effectually to oppose Provera, he gained by forced marches the heights of Rivoli, which became the scene of a series of bloody and obstinate conflicts, ending in the entire defeat of the Austrians; a result proceeding in the greatest measure from the genius, activity, and unfailing presence of mind displayed by Bonaparte: his horse was repeatedly wounded, and

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Jan. 8th.
Battles of
Rivoli.

14th.

his personal influence was unsparingly employed in bringing the troops into action. Massena, too, distinguished himself most gloriously, and the name of Rivoli became to him, at an after period, a title of nobility. Without allowing his troops or himself a moment's repose, Bonaparte proceeded to encounter Provera, who, advancing from the lower Adige to the relief of Mantua, had reached the lines of the besiegers; but, on the arrival of Bonaparte, was defeated, and, after a desperate defence, obliged to lay down his arms.

Wurmser was thus deprived of all hope of relief. His garrison was reduced to half rations, and their miserable provision of horse-flesh all consumed. He sent, therefore, Klenau, his principal aid-de-camp, to the head-quarters of General Serrurier, to speak of a capitulation, protesting, at the same time, however contrary to truth, that he was provisioned for three months. Bonaparte, who, by address and contrivance, had gained admission to this conference, wrote on the margin of the Marshal's proposals his own determination, accompanied with a declaration so replete with honour and humanity, that it is to be regretted that such were not his constant characteristics. "These," he said, "are the terms which Wurmser may accept at present, and which will be equally tendered to him at any period when he finds farther resistance impossible. We are aware he is too much a man of honour to give up the fortress and city, so long and honourably defended, while the means of resistance remain in his power. If he delays accepting the conditions for a week, for a month, for two months, they shall be equally his when he chooses to accept them. To-morrow I pass the Po, and march upon Rome." The surrender was arranged; the garrison, consisting of nearly twenty thousand men, one half of whom were fit for service, was to go into France as prisoners, but to be among the first exchanged. Bonaparte declined being personally present when the veteran Wurmser had the mortification to surrender his sword. It was given into the hands of Serrurier.

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Defeat of
Provera.

Surrender of
Mantua.

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This event, as Napoléon had always announced, terminated the war in Italy; what remained was insurrection, revolution, plunder; active war was to be pursued in the hereditary states of the Emperor*.

* In the different narratives of these transactions, there is no material variety. I have consulted all the histories, Berthier's Narrative of the Campaigns, State Papers, and other sources of information; but have chiefly followed *Les Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat*, tome iv. and Scott's *Life of Napoléon*, vol. iii. chaps. vii. and viii.

CHAPTER THE HUNDREDTH.

1797.

Pecuniary difficulties.—Pressure on the Bank.—Order in Council.—Spirited resolves of the mercantile body.—Message to Parliament.—Measures proposed by Mr. Pitt.—Observations of Mr. Fox.—Mr. Sheridan—Mr. Nicholls—Mr. Pitt—Duke of Norfolk.—Mr. Pitt moves for a Committee—Mr. Sheridan.—Motion in the House of Lords—Debate—Marquis of Lansdowne.—Motion carried.—Motion of Mr. Fox—Dr. Laurence.—Committee in the House of Lords.—Reports of the Committee.—Issue of small Notes — Dollars — Seven-shilling Pieces — and Copper-money.—Bill respecting Small Notes.—Bank Restriction Bill.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Nicholls.—Mr. Sheridan's Motion.—Bill passed—its effect.—Sir William Pulteney proposes a New Bank—opposed—lost.—Motions respecting Sinecures.—Mr. Windham.—Debate.—House of Lords.—New Loan.—Message for a loan to Ireland—and the Emperor.—Mr. Fox.—Proposed compensation on the loyalty loan—discussed—abandoned.—Proposed taxes.—Newspapers.—Projected invasion of England.—Spanish fleet.—Opposed by Admiral Jervis—is joined by Admiral Parker and Commodore Nelson.—Fight off Cape St. Vincent's.—Rejoicings at Lisbon.—Observations.—Thanks of Parliament.—Precipitate motion of Mr. Keene.—Answer of Ministers.—Thanks to other officers.—Peerage conferred on Sir John Jervis—Nelson promoted—Subscription for widows and orphans.

Soon after the termination of the Christmas recess, the attention of Parliament was called to a state

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Pecuniary
difficulties.

of pecuniary emergency, which, although not unexpected, could not have been contemplated without alarm, the declared inability of the Bank of England to make payments in ready money; great and repeated drains of bullion, in consequence of the operations of the war, loans and subsidies to foreign princes, payments for the freights and cargoes of neutral ships taken, had greatly enhanced the price of gold*; and, as the current money of the country consisted almost entirely in that metal, exportation to an alarming amount was apprehended. By frequent remonstrances, the Bank directors had apprized the Chancellor of the Exchequer of their situation, and they formed a determination to limit their further advances on treasury bills to £500,000. Nevertheless, on pressing solicitations, and a statement that serious embarrassments to the public service would otherwise ensue, they departed from their resolution, and advances continued to be made, until the debt due from the public, including arrears of interest, exceeded ten millions and a half. A loan to Ireland of a million and a half was also contemplated, and the demand for cash which it would occasion threatened a declaration of insolvency, which could only be averted by diminishing the advances to the treasury, and decreasing the accommodation to merchants in the way of discount. Beside these untoward circumstances, the menace of an invasion caused many persons to withdraw their deposits from country banks, rendering some of them insolvent, and compelling them all to withdraw from the bank large sums in money. Demands for cash rapidly increased, and in one week greatly exceeded those of any similar preceding period, and the last two days of the week surpassed the previous four.

Feb. 7th.

Pressure on
the Bank.
20th.
25th.

24th.

26th.

This alarming state of affairs was communicated to Mr. Pitt, with requests to know how far he thought the Bank might continue money payments, and when he would think it necessary to interfere, before their cash should be so reduced as to injure the immediate service of the state. At the request of ministers, the King

* From £3 17s. 10½d. to £4 4s. per ounce, in October 1795.

himself came to town, and, in consideration of the emergency, held a cabinet council on a Sunday, which, by an order declared to be indispensably necessary for the public service, prohibited the directors of the Bank from issuing any cash in payment, until the sense of Parliament could be taken, and measures adopted for maintaining the means of circulation, and supporting public and commercial credit. This order was immediately published by the directors, with a notice that the general concerns of the Bank were in the most affluent and flourishing situation, such as to preclude every doubt as to the security of its notes; and that they would continue their usual discounts for accommodation of the commercial interest, paying them and also dividend-warrants in bank-notes.

An event, the mere anticipation of which would have been regarded as the proclamation of public ruin, could not fail to create a powerful general sensation; but now it was that England enjoyed the gratifying contemplation of the difference between a national prosperity derived from, and growing with, the augmented wealth and commerce of the nation, and a factitious claim derived from plunder and confiscation, and enforced with the sword of the soldier and the axe of the executioner. A meeting of the principal merchants, bankers, and commercial men was forthwith convened at the Mansion House, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor, who resolved unanimously that they would not refuse to receive bank-notes in payment of any sum, and would pay in the same manner. This resolution was signed by all present, and, in a few days, by above three thousand principal merchants, bankers, and traders. Such was the effect of this truly patriotic meeting in reanimating public confidence, that, before its separation, the price of stocks advanced two per cent. A paper, nearly similar, was signed and published by the lords of the Privy Council; and in a few days all transactions proceeded in an uninterrupted course*.

A message from the King, accompanied with the

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Order in
Council.

Spirited re-
solves of the
mercantile
body.

27th.

* McPherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 407 to 411.

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C.

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Message to
Parliament.
27th.

order in council, recommended this most important subject to the immediate and serious attention of both Houses of Parliament, and expressed a confident reliance on their taking the measures best calculated to meet any temporary pressure, and call forth the extensive resources of the kingdom in support of public and commercial credit, and in defence of their dearest interests.

Measures
proposed by
Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt gave notice that, when this message should be taken into consideration, he would propose the appointment of a select committee to investigate the outstanding engagements and resources of the Bank, declaring his firm opinion that those resources never were more abundant. He proposed also, to declare that the engagements of the Bank outstanding, or to be contracted to a certain amount, were secured by the public, and that notes, instead of cash, would be received in all pecuniary transactions.

Observations
of Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox thought the enquiries of the committee should extend to the causes which had produced the present embarrassment. They should examine into the measures which led to this most extraordinary scheme, a scheme no man could think of without shuddering. To make bank notes legal payment from the public to the individual, was a measure which must shake the very foundation of public credit. The warrants on dividends were the interest on the national debt, and the Bank being bound by law to pay these warrants, not in notes, but in money, this alarming proposition might produce the most dreadful consequences to every individual in this country; nay, it might even put an end to its existence as a powerful nation.

Mr. Sheridan.

After the motion for taking the King's message into consideration on the morrow had been acceded to, Mr. Sheridan kept the discussion alive by moving that no further exportation of specie, or gold, should take place for the use of any foreign power, until after a full review of the causes of the present exigencies. He arraigned the order in council as a strange and unconstitutional requisition of all the cash in the

Bank. The minister was acting on the same system of delusion which had characterised all his administration. The Bank ought to have laid a statement of their situation before the House, describing the causes of their embarrassments, and praying for interference; but, instead of this proceeding, an order in council had put all the cash of the Bank in requisition; cash, to which government had no more right than to that of any individual! It was notorious that a leak had sprung in the vessel, and it was pretty evident that it had been occasioned by the exportation of specie to foreign countries.

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In seconding this motion, Mr. Nicholls endeavoured to extract from the minister a declaration, whether it was his intention that bank notes should be declared a legal tender to the public creditor? If so, he was about to proclaim an act of insolvency; and he reprobated his silence as an instance of atrocious arrogance.

Mr. Nicholls.

Mr. Pitt observed on the irregularity of making such interrogatories, when there was no regular discussion before the House; answered the assertion of Mr. Sheridan, by shewing that in the last year only a small portion of the contribution sent abroad consisted of specie, and moved the order of the day, which, after a short debate, was carried*.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Sheridan's motion was repeated in the House of Lords by the Duke of Norfolk, and with no better success†.

Duke of
Norfolk.

According to his notice, Mr. Pitt moved for a committee to examine outstanding demands on the Bank, and their funds, and, with the result, to report their opinion on the necessity of confirming and continuing measures taken in pursuance of the minute of council.

Mr. Pitt
moves for a
committee.

Without directly resisting the motion, or proposing any amendment, Mr. Fox amply reviewed the order of council and its causes, censuring the conduct of government, and urging an extensive inquiry. If, in the

Mr. Fox.

* 247 to 70.

† 34 to 5.

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navy, deservedly a favourite service with the people of this country, it was the uniform practice to call to a court-martial every officer who had been unsuccessful, however meritorious his conduct might have been, what should be the conduct of the House when a minister had been guilty of alarming mismanagement; when he had issued a proclamation, in the name of the Privy Council, to destroy the public credit of the country? He was, at least *prima facie*, a culprit before them and the public. Had any three months passed during the present war in which he had not produced some new expedient? And had they not every one proved erroneous? Year after year he had amused them with ideas of the finances of France,—now on the verge, now in the gulph, of bankruptcy, with computations upon their assignats and their mandats; they could not possibly continue: all perfectly true. But, while thus amusing the country, he had led it to the very same verge, aye, into the very same gulph. The House ought to enter into a full inquiry on this matter; for the authority of an inquiring was much greater than that of a confiding House of Commons.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Sheridan supplied that which Mr. Fox had left deficient, by moving as an amendment that the committee should also inquire into the causes which had produced the order in council. A long debate produced only reiterated assertions and denials, adorned, according to the talent or taste of the speakers, with flashes of declamation or wit, or with strong personal invectives; in conclusion, the amendment was negatived on a division*, but afterward conceded, on the motion of Mr. Fox; the committee was to be of fifteen, chosen by ballot.

28th.
Motion in the
House of
Lords.

Debate,

Motions to the same effect as those proposed by Mr. Pitt were made by Lord Grenville. The Duke of Bedford opposed that for a secret committee, and offered an amendment, limiting their duty to an inquiry into the causes of the stoppage at the Bank, but excluding from their reports any opinion on the neces-

sity of providing for the confirmation and continuance of measures taken in pursuance of the order in council. The Dukes of Norfolk and Grafton were adverse to a secret committee, as secrecy engendered suspicion. If the Bank was equal to all demands, it was for their honour that there should be no concealment.

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1797.
Debate.

The Marquis of Lansdowne claimed credit for having long foreseen and foretold the present crisis. In every session since 1793, he said he had bored their lordships with prophetic admonitions. He made many judicious observations on the nature of the public credit, and ascribed the present state of affairs to the inordinate increase of expense in places and establishments in every corner of the empire, and to the war, which occasioned so vast an exportation of specie. "Mark my prophecy, my lords," he exclaimed; "if you attempt to make bank notes a legal tender, their credit will perish. This is not matter of conjecture, but of experience. A fever is as much a fever in London as in Paris or Amsterdam; and the stoppage of payment must be the same, in whatever country it shall happen." He also prophesied great evils to arise from jobbing adventurers of all descriptions; the precious metals would disappear, and every article would bear one price for money and another for paper. He treated the subject in every point of view, and cautioned ministers against frantic and delusive expeditions, particularly against the folly of attempting the Spanish South American possessions, which, in three or four years, would of themselves fall away from Spain. A greater good could not occur to that country than to be deprived of them; nor a greater evil to England than their addition to our already over-grown possessions

Marquis of
Lansdowne.

After the Lord Chancellor and Lord Grenville had declared that it never entered into the contemplation of ministers to make bank notes a legal tender, or to coerce the reception of them, the motion was carried without amendment*.

Motion
carried.

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C.

1797.
March 1st.
Motion of
Mr. Fox.

Dr. Laurence.

2nd.
Committee in
the House of
Lords.

Reports of the
Committees.
March 3—7.

Before the committee already voted was formed, Mr. Fox attempted to obtain the appointment of another to inquire into the causes which produced the late order in council: it failed*, after a series of speeches, more distinguished by asperity of observation than by any other quality. The debate is chiefly remarkable for having produced the first parliamentary effort of the learned civilian, Dr. French Laurence, the intimate and confidential friend of Mr. Burke: his eloquence was never distinguished by those graces which captivate great assemblies, and give popular renown to speakers; but they were always acknowledged, even by his adversaries, to be replete with learning, sense, and profound observation†. After the committee had been completed, Mr. Sheridan did Mr. Fox the unnecessary disservice of moving that his name should be added; a proposal which was negatived on a division by no means flattering‡. A committee of nine was also nominated in the House of Lords.

From the reports of these two committees, it appeared, most satisfactorily, that, far from being in a state of insolvency, the Bank possessed, exclusive of the debt from government of nearly £11,700,000, bearing interest at three per cent., a clear surplus of almost £3,827,000; the drain of cash was ascribed to increasing demands from the country and other causes; and a continuance and confirmation of the measures already taken was recommended§.

To facilitate the transaction of business during the suspension of payment in gold, the Bank issued notes for sums of one and two pounds each; for a supply of silver, they stamped on a large number of Spanish dol-

* 161 to 67.

† Mr. Windham's description of this first attempt is characteristic: "Dr. Laurence's first performance, you may tell Mr. Burke, succeeded perfectly well. He keeled a little in the launching, which gave me some minutes anxiety, but he soon righted when he touched the water, and shewed, as he is, a grand first-rate." *Epistolary Correspondence*, p. 146.

‡ 140 to 53.

§ This was the substance of the first reports, which were very short. Subsequently (March 31 and April 21st and 28th), further reports were produced, in which the state of the Bank and of the country, with respect to finance, was minutely and accurately displayed, the causes of present pressure shown, and the fear of insolvency demonstrated to be utterly groundless.—*Hansard's Debates*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 23, 27, 205, 441, 449.—*Journals of the two Houses*, at the dates; also *McPherson's Annals*, vol. iv. pp. 412 et seqq.

lars a miniature impression of the King's head, and issued them at four shillings and nine pence each, hoping that the enhancement of their price would prevent exportation; it did so, but the hand of fraud reached them in another direction; a false stamp, perfect in its imitation, was impressed on a great amount of Spanish dollars; and, before the end of the year, the Bank was obliged to withdraw them all from circulation, paying, at a great loss, for those falsely fabricated. Government also issued a coinage of gold, in pieces of the value of seven shillings, and pieces of copper coin of one penny and twopence each.*

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C.

1797.

Dollars.
Seven-shilling
pieces,
and Copper-
money.

In consequence of observations during the late debates, Mr. Wilberforce Bird obtained leave to bring in a bill to suspend the operation of the statutes, prohibiting the negotiation of certain small promissory notes by manufacturers and bankers†. He proposed that it should extend only to persons not residing in London, Westminster, or Southwark; but, on the suggestion of Mr. Pitt, the enactment was made general; and, after some very slight observations from Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox, passed with unusual dispatch. A similar measure was taken with respect to Scotland, by repealing a restraining act‡; and, to prevent inconvenience to the holders, the amount of small notes was to be recovered on complaint before one justice of peace, with costs.

Bill respecting
small notes.

March 3rd.

Mr. Pitt next moved to bring in a bill for confirming and continuing, for a limited time, the restriction contained in the late minute of council. Mr. Fox did not contend that the bill should not be brought in; but argued that the more Parliament identified the Bank with the government, the more they would make it dependent on the measures of administration, and cement an union, calculated, not for permanent good, but for temporary expediency; they would increase the source from which our misfortunes had sprung, and add a great calamity to those with which

9th.
Bank restric-
tion Bill.

Mr. Fox.

* McPherson's Annals, vol. iv. p. 415.

† 15 Geo. III. cap. li. 17 Geo. III. cap. xxx.

‡ 5 Geo. III. c. xlix.

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C.

1797.

the country was already oppressed. If the Bank directors considered the public interest more than that of the proprietors, they departed from their proper sphere, and the effect of their conduct was to sacrifice their private interest to the public good. We have heard much, he said, of the phrase, "Perish commerce, let the constitution live!" The exclamation of the Bank should be, "Perish commerce, provided we pay our debts."

March 10th to
April 7th.
Mr. Nicholls.

This was the tone assumed, in all the stages of the bill, by members of opposition. The assignats were not forgotten; Mr. Nicholls described their early popularity, and ultimate depreciation, and menaced this country with an enormous debt and a bloody revolution, as the consequences of persevering in the present measure. Many amendments were proposed, of which some were adopted.

Mr. Sheridan's
motion.

Mr. Sheridan obstructed the progress of the bill, by moving that it was highly expedient, as well for the honour of government, as for the re-establishment of public credit, that speedy measures should be taken for repaying to the Bank the whole, or a considerable part, of the advances already made for the public service. Mr. Pitt, having first controverted many of the statements advanced, proposed the previous question, with some observations on the mover for disheartening the public and dealing in invective, instead of lending his assistance to remove the difficulties which clogged the credit of the country. Some angry answers were made by Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan, and, on a division, the previous question was rejected by a majority of four to one*.

May 3.
Bill passed;
its effect.

The bill finally passed; its effect was to indemnify the Governor and Company for any acts done in pursuance of the order in council, and to supersede all actions which might have been brought against them for refusing payments. They were prohibited from issuing cash in payments, except in sums under twenty shillings; and sheltered from prosecutions for with-

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1797.

holding payment of notes, for which they might be willing to give others of equal amount in exchange. They were restricted from advancing in loan to the Treasury, either in cash or notes, any sum exceeding £600,000, until they should be authorized to pay in cash. Provision was made for some other contingencies; for advances to the bankers of London, Westminster, and Southwark, and the chartered banks in Scotland; and collectors of the revenue were not to refuse bank notes in payment. The duration of the restriction was limited to the 24th of June following; before the end of the session, it was enlarged to one month after the commencement of the next session; and a clause was introduced, by which the subject was protected against an arrest for debt, unless the affidavit to hold him to bail contained a statement that the amount of debt claimed had not been tendered in money or bank-notes*.

June 22.

In the House of Lords, the Duke of Bedford proposed a series of twenty resolutions, censuring several acts which had previously been discussed in both Houses; and the day after these had been decided in the negative, Mr. Grey moved nineteen of the twenty in the House of Commons. Mr. Pitt, having fully answered his allegations, retired while divisions were taken on the first and the last of the resolutions, and the numbers against the mover on both were nearly the same†.

May 15.

16th.

To prevent the recurrence of the inconveniences already experienced, Sir William Pulteney moved to bring in a bill for establishing another Bank, unless the Bank of England should pay cash for their notes on the 24th of June. In an able and well-considered speech, he stated his project in every possible view; pointed out its benefits, anticipated objections, and strove to obviate them. Benefits had been found to result from the establishment of two banks in Scotland,

May 30th.
Sir William
Pulteney
proposes a
new Bank.

* 37 Geo III. c. xlv. The duration of these restrictions was, on several subsequent occasions, extended according to the necessities of the times.—Macpherson's Annals, vol. iv. p. 416.

† 206 to 66, and 206 to 60.

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C.

1797.

and he trusted that advantages still more important would be produced here. It would certainly encourage speculations, but not that species denominated bubbles; nor would it increase the price of provisions; that was now four times greater than when America was discovered; but, in the same period, the quantity of gold and silver was increased fourfold; so that, strictly speaking, provisions were not dearer; but gold and silver were diminished in value. An increase of coin and notes would counteract monopoly; and the new Bank could not affect the interest of the stockholders in the old.

Opposed.

Sir Francis Baring, Mr. Samuel Thornton, and Mr. Manning, all eminent and wealthy members of the commercial community, controverted the assertions and arguments of the mover. The Solicitor-General and Mr. Pitt added their weight to this side of the question; and, notwithstanding the counterpoise afforded by Mr. Sheridan, the motion was lost*.

Lost.

March 13, 23.
Motions
respecting
sinecures.

While the discussions relative to the Bank were proceeding, Mr. Harrison and the Marquis of Lansdowne, in their respective Houses, brought forward motions for inquiry whether relief to the burthens of the people, or provision for future expense, might not be obtained by the reduction of useless places, sinecure offices, exorbitant fees, and other retrenchments.

Mr. Windham.

In the House of Commons, the debate was long and animated. Few general principles were urged but those which had long been produced in every public discussion, in every pamphlet, in every newspaper in which official reforms had been mentioned. This gave occasion to Mr. Windham, in an able speech, not unblemished by a propensity to use expressions which his enemies could convert into bye-words, to observe that gentlemen ought to recollect where they were, and talk like statesmen in Parliament, and not as if they were haranguing a club at a public house. With his usual force, he decried the folly and injustice of expecting that great public services should be rendered without their just rewards.

The less important measures of economy which had been suggested, he treated as a few miserable savings and scrapings, the odds and ends of candles, cheese parings, and tattered rags, and remnants, "a thing made up of shreds and patches;" and he moved the previous question.

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1797.

In the residue of the debate, the real merits of the proposed measure were ably investigated by Mr. Pitt; but other members indulged in gross personalities. Mr. Burke's works having been mentioned, many allusions were made to his last publication on the proposed regicide peace, and on his bill of economical reform. Reflections made on Mr. Rose, his sinecures and reversions, drew from him observations on those which had been given to and sold by Mr. Fox. The expressions which ensued were of a nature to call for the interference of the Speaker, who, with his usual judgment, dignity, and impartiality, tranquillized the irritated feelings of the members, and restored order to the debate. The motion was lost*.

Debate.

In the upper House, the debate was confined to a speech from Lord Lansdowne, and a short answer from Lord Grenville; when the motion was negatived without a division.

23rd.
House of
Lords.

Urged by the necessity of the times, Mr. Pitt had contracted for a new loan, amounting to eighteen millions; of which one million and a half was for Ireland, and three and a-half, conditionally, for the Emperor. In detailing the nature of the proposed supply, the minister stated, with regret, that the terms on which he could raise the money were unfavourable to the public, as a bonus equal to £6 17s. was allowed, which, with the charges of management, and the redemption fund, would raise the interest to £8 7s. 6d. per cent.

April 26.
New loan.

A message from the King recommended a loan to Ireland of £1,500,000; their Parliament undertaking to make provision for the payment of the interest and charges, and to guarantee the loan, and a

April 29.
Message for
loans to
Ireland and
the Emperor.

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C.

1797.

May 1.

Mr. Fox.

provision for remittances to the Emperor, to the amount, in all, of two millions. Mr. Pitt moved, in a committee, that £1,880,000 should be granted for the loan to the Emperor.

Mr. Fox endeavoured to frustrate the minister's intention, by moving that the chairman should quit the chair, and reviewed the whole financial situation of the country, particularly the difficulties felt by the Bank, and the position of the Emperor and the French on the Continent. His motion failed, after a short debate*.

Proposed
compensation
on the Loyalty
Loan.

May 31.

Discussed.

In consequence of alterations which took place in the money market by this new transaction, and of applications from a committee appointed by the Bankers of London, Mr. Pitt brought forward, in the committee of finance, a proposition for indemnifying those who had suffered by subscribing to the Loyalty Loan. They ought to be considered, he said, as persons who intended to aid the public service, without any personal advantage, and had an equitable, though not an absolute, ground of right to apply to the country for relief. The resolution was strenuously opposed, as a sure introduction to numerous jobs; the parties who contracted had their eyes open, they were not deceived, and ought to be bound by their contracts. As no deduction could have been made from their profits had they been gainers, they had no claim to an indemnity when losers; and the patriotic loyalty which shrunk from a small loss was held up to great derision. Mr. Dent moved that the chairman should leave the chair without putting the question; his motion failed†; but when the resolution was reported, a more vigorous debate took place. It was argued that members who had subscribed to the loan, and were therefore interested in the decision of the question, could not vote. On this point, the Speaker pronounced that the House could not, under any existing rule or order, preclude any member from voting; but he cited a precedent in 1664, when the vote of a member, on a point in which he was directly interested,

June 1.

* 193 to 58.

† 40 to 26.

was disallowed; and should such a question now arise, it would be for the judgment of the House. On a division, the minister's resolution was carried by a majority of one only*.

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1797.

Whether to annihilate this majority, or for the sake of uttering a personal reflection, Mr. Sheridan moved that the vote of George Rose should be disallowed. He did not succeed; and Mr. Pitt declared that he would bring in a bill, but, on mature consideration, desisted altogether. It would, indeed, have been most imprudent to urge, on the strength of so small a majority, a measure which was opposed alike by argument and justice†.

Abandoned.

Among the taxes by which the minister proposed to provide for the interest on the new loan, was one of three-halfpence on every newspaper, with an increased duty on advertisements; and on carriages passing through turnpikes, a tax equal to the existing tolls. The statement made by the minister was stigmatised by Mr. Fox as delusive even beyond his former calculations, and both he and Mr. Grey animadverted on the application of a portion of the money voted in the preceding year; the resolutions were, however, with one exception, carried without a division. Mr. Pitt stated his expectation that the duty on newspapers would be exposed to some reflections; but he considered it perfectly fair, and of a kind to be productive; newspapers, being an article of luxury, sought after with astonishing avidity, and not likely to be injured in their sale.

Proposed
taxes.

Newspapers.

Mr. Sheridan, after an animated eulogy on the talent, industry, and skilful division of labour, necessarily, and almost wonderfully, displayed in the daily production of those sheets, treated the proposal of an additional tax as a severe blow aimed at the liberty of the press. The tax was not merely a measure of revenue; it was meant to deprive the lower classes of people of the only means of obtaining political

* 36 to 35.

† Debates and Annual Register, vol. xxxix. p. 129 to 131.

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C.1797
June 30.Projected
invasion
of England.

knowledge. The resolution was carried*. In fine, Mr. Pitt voluntarily renounced the duty on carriages passing through turnpikes, or parcels transmitted by stages or waggons, and that on advertisements; for all which, and for a proposed tax on inland navigation, others were substituted*.

Notwithstanding their recent failure, the French were still intent on an invasion of England. Their pride and cupidity were equally appealed to by boasts of the certain triumph of republican bayonets over a luxurious, idle, and dastardly foe, and the immense treasure which was to enrich individuals and the Republic from the plunder of the modern Peru. To obtain the desired mastery in the channel, Spain and Holland were called upon, and fleets were prepared at Cadiz and in the Texel, which, united with that of Brest, would amount to upward of seventy sail of the line; a force which no British fleet was supposed to be capable of resisting. In forming this project, the distance between the several ports seems to have been overlooked; nor were the skill, alacrity, and bravery of the British commanders and sailors, or their zeal in sustaining the cause of their country against every invader, duly considered.

Feb. 4.
Spanish fleet.

Don Joseph de Cordova, with twenty-seven sail of the line, ten frigates, and a brig, sailed from Carthage, with no obstacle to his progress except that of Sir John Jervis, who commanded in those parts. The Spaniards reckoned, among their force, one ship, *La Santissima Trinidad*, with four decks, carrying one hundred and thirty-six guns, and deemed the largest man-of-war in the world; six three-deckers of one hundred and twelve guns; two eighty-fours, and eighteen seventy-fours: while the British commander had only two ships of one hundred guns; two of ninety-eight; two of ninety; eight seventy-fours, and one sixty-four; less therefore in number than the enemy by upward of twelve hundred guns. Nor was

Opposed by
Admiral
Jervis.

* 151 to 43.

† From some unaccountable cause, all mention of these debates is omitted from the *Parliamentary History*: the above information is derived from the *Annual Register*, vol. xxxix. p. 124 to 128; and the newspapers.

the British Admiral, when first apprized of the sailing of Cordova, able to count upon even this comparatively incompetent force; six first-rate men of war had been separated from him by various accidents, and he was reduced to nine sail, when, most opportunely, he was joined by Rear-Admiral Parker, with five-sail of the line, from England; and the Culloden, one of those which had been separated from him, was enabled to rejoin, although in a crippled condition.

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1797.

He is joined
by Admiral
Parker,

If, under these circumstances of apparent disadvantage, Admiral Jervis, consulting only the preservation of his fleet, had effected a safe retreat from an overwhelming foe, he would not merely have escaped censure, he would have secured general applause. Commodore Nelson, sailing with a convoy from Porto Ferrajo to Gibraltar, had acquired exact information of the state and position of the enemy's fleet, and, reaching the station off Cape St. Vincent, communicated it to Jervis, who, justly appreciating the value of such a coadjutor, directed him to shift his pendant on board the Captain, a seventy-four; and signals were made to prepare for close action, and during the night to keep in close order*.

and
Commodore
Nelson.
13th.

At day-break, Sir John Jervis saw the force with which he had to engage; and if mere numbers and strength could have occasioned terror, he had abundant reason for alarm; but to the discerning eye of the experienced seaman, circumstances of hope and confidence presented themselves: the Spanish ships were scattered far and wide, and the manner of working them shewed that practised seamen did not form the crews. Cordova had, in fact, but few real sailors under his command; his equipment, being made in haste, and under peremptory command, artillerymen and soldiers had been put on board. He was also

14th.
Fight off
Cape
St. Vincent.

* It is a curious fact, that Sir Gilbert Elliott, Lord Garlies, and Colonel Drinkwater, who sailed with Nelson, and might, with great propriety, have proceeded to England, yielded to the noble impulse of national feeling, and remained unnecessarily exposed to danger, that they might witness the glory of their country's arms. Colonel Drinkwater afterwards published a luminous and well-written narrative of the events.

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1797.

deceived by contradictory statements: an American captain had informed him, when such was the truth, that the British admiral commanded only nine sail of the line; and subsequently, an officer of his own, in order, as he afterward explained, to arouse him, represented them as amounting to forty sail: the deception, if well intended, failed; for, instead of arousing, it only perplexed the admiral, and alarmed the whole fleet. The intelligence received from the American had led Cordova, instead of securing himself in Cadiz, to seek an enemy, whom he deemed a certain prey; the signal of his own captain extinguished his too sanguine confidence; and while his spirits were thus quelled, and his mind irresolute, his dismay was increased by a sight of his opponent's fleet, and the skill and judgment displayed in its arrangement.

Before the Spaniards could form a regular order of battle, Sir John Jervis, carrying a press of sail, passed through their fleet, and by a skilful manœuvre separated nine of their ships from the main body; only one of them succeeded in passing through the British line and rejoining their friends; the others took to flight, and did not appear again until the close of the action. Directing his attention to the main body, still greatly superior to him in number and weight of metal, the admiral made a signal for the ships to tack in succession: but Nelson, who was in the rear of the line, perceiving that the enemy was bearing up before the wind, with an intention of forming their line, going at large to join the separated ships, or else of avoiding an engagement; with the prompt decision of a truly great mind, disobeyed the order (most prudent and proper in itself, except for the peculiar and unexpected circumstances), and, by management equally skilful and intrepid, brought his ship into action with the huge *Santissima Trinidad*, the *San Joseph*, and the *Salvador del Mondo*, of 112 guns each, and three seventy-fours, the *San Nicolas*, the *San Isidro*, and another. He was immediately joined and nobly supported by Captain Trow-

bridge in the Culloden ; and these two ships, strong in skill, discipline, and the confidence of officers and men in each other, sustained, for nearly an hour, this “ apparently, but not really, unequal contest*.” The Blenheim, of ninety guns, Captain Frederick, and the Excellent, Captain Collingwood, then came to his assistance, and, under their well-directed fire, the Salvador del Mondo and the San Isidro dropped astern ; the latter struck, and it was believed that the other did the same, but Captain Collingwood, instead of waiting to take possession of a conquered vessel, hastened to the relief of Nelson, who was assailed within pistol-shot, by three first-rates, by the San Nicolas and a seventy-four. This interference was most opportune, as the continual and long fire of the Captain had almost expended her ammunition ; and the loss of her fore-top mast and wheel, with other injuries she had received in her rigging, had rendered her nearly ungovernable.

Disappointed in his plan of raking the enemy's rear ships, Sir John Jervis, by measures judiciously conceived and successfully executed, made himself master of two, while Nelson was engaged in another direction. The San Nicolas luffing up, the San Joseph fell on board her, and Nelson resumed his station abreast of them, and close along side ; but the Captain being now incapable of farther service, either in the line or chase, by Nelson's command, the San Nicolas was boarded and captured, her officers surrendering their swords. But when the English were in full possession of every part of the ship, a fire of pistols and musketry opened upon them from the stern gallery of the San Joseph : Nelson gave orders for boarding that ship from the San Nicolas. It was done in an instant, himself leading the way, and exclaiming—“ Westminster Abbey, or victory !” Berry assisted him into the main chains ; and at that moment a Spanish officer, looking over the quarter-deck-rail, announced a surrender. Nelson was speedily on the quarter-

* The expression of Nelson.

CHAP.
C.

1797.

deck, where the Spanish captain yielded up his sword, stating that the admiral was below, dying of his wounds. The Spaniards had still eighteen or nineteen ships, which had suffered little or no injury : that part of the fleet which had been separated from the main body in the morning, was coming up, and Sir John Jervis made signal to bring to. His ships could not have formed : the Captain was lying a perfect wreck on board her two prizes ; and many of the other vessels were so shattered in their masts and rigging, as to be wholly unmanageable. The Spanish Admiral, meantime, according to his official account, being altogether undecided in his own opinion respecting the state of the fleet, inquired of his captains whether it was proper to renew the action ; nine of them answered explicitly that it was not ; others replied, that delay was expedient ; and, as two only voted for continuing the action, Cordova, on the next morning, doubled Cape Vincent and entered Cadiz.

15th.

In this truly glorious action, the loss of our fleet in killed and wounded was exactly three hundred, more than one fourth of which fell on Nelson's ship, the Captain. On the side of the enemy, the destruction must have been much greater, as the four captured vessels alone gave two-hundred and sixty-one killed, and three-hundred and forty-two wounded. And it is observed that in our fleet the expenditure of ammunition was beyond any recent example. The Culloden used one hundred and seventy barrels of powder ; the Captain one hundred and forty-six ; and the Blenheim, one hundred and eighty ; and other ships in similar portions.

The ships taken were the Salvador del Mundo and San Joseph, of one-hundred and twelve guns each, the San Nicolas of eighty-four, and the San Isidro of seventy-four. The close of the day, before the four prizes were secured, undoubtedly saved the Spanish admiral's flag from falling into our hands ; the Santissima Trinidad, in which it was carried, was a perfect wreck when the action ceased.

27th.
Rejoicings at
Lisbon.

Shortly after this illustrious achievement, the vic-

torious commander sailed from Lagos Bay to Lisbon ; where the rejoicings of our allies, the Portuguese, were nearly as ardent as if the victory had been their own ; and they received their triumphant friends with unbounded cordiality.

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C.

1797.

It is cheering to observe the difference which twenty years had produced in the feelings of our naval commanders; we had not now to lament the frustration of one admiral's plans by the reluctance or negligence of another ; the withholding of brave exertion through fear of problematic or speculative danger ; or a vigilant and jealous inspection of each other's conduct, in hopes to find ground for charges before a court-martial, or to furnish topics for declamations in Parliament. When Nelson, after disobeying the order of his superior officer, presented himself on board his ship, begrimed with the soot and smoke of the action, his dress deranged and part of his hat shot away, no sign of distance, no word of reproach awaited him, but the gallant Jervis strained him in his arms as a brother. In the public dispatches, experience had taught the propriety of abstaining from the mention of particular officers ; but, in their private correspondence, Jervis, Nelson, Collingwood, and the other heroes of the day, spoke of each other in terms which denoted not only the absence of all jealous rivalry, but the cordial affection becoming associates in patriotism and brothers in arms. Nor was this feeling confined to the superior officers ; it has been most properly deemed worth while to record the sturdy coolness with which William Fearney, an old comrade of Nelson in the *Agammemnon*, received into his hands, and placed under his arm, the swords surrendered by the Spanish officers on board the *San Joseph* ; or, the frank simplicity of the honest sailor, who, in the same ship, grasped the hand of his illustrious commander, saying he might not soon have such another place to do it in, and he was glad to see him there. If it is the province of history to teach by examples, such

Observations.

CHAP.
C.

1797.

examples are most beneficial, as shewing the means by which those intrusted with command may make themselves beloved without ceasing to be respected, and how the principle of patriotism may be carried to its utmost height by the inspirations of personal regard. Of this victory, gained by mere dint of valour and skill over an enemy not deficient in courage, and almost double in strength to the victors, it is justly observed, that it bore all the distinguishing marks of unequivocal superiority. Nor were the beneficial consequences inferior to its brilliancy. It reduced the Spanish marine to a nullity during the remainder of the war, and cut off, at a single blow, the left wing of the grand armada of invasion*.

March 3.
Thanks of
Parliament.

If the intelligence of this victory was calculated to impart satisfaction to the people of Lisbon, much more ardent was the joy with which it was received in London. Being disclosed from authentic and indisputable sources, the expression of public joy outran the speed of official communication; and Mr. Dundas, in addressing the House of Commons, observed, that he had intended only to give notice of a motion for an early day; but, as the knowledge of the event was as extensive as its importance was a just cause of exultation, and, as he was satisfied that the House would participate in the rapturous sensations which had already been expressed by the public, and that every British heart must be united to pay the gallant Admiral the tribute of gratitude and admiration due to his admirable conduct and eminent services, he moved the thanks of the House to the Admiral, for his able and gallant conduct in the most brilliant and decisive victory obtained over the Spanish fleet. This motion was seconded by Mr. Fox, who described the victory as the most brilliant exploit in the annals

* Avoiding, as much as possible, mere technical details, I have followed, in this narrative, beside the histories and gazettes, Southey's *Life of Nelson*, vol. i. page 169; and Harrison's *Life of the same great personage*, vol. i. page 155, et seqq., where an ample extract is made from the able pamphlet of Colonel Drinkwater. Also, the *Life of Nelson*, by Clarke and McArthur, vol. i. page 343; and the *Correspondence of Lord Collingwood*, page 35.

of the country, and was agreed to with perfect unanimity.

But, as if to shew that neither exultation in public good nor lamentation over public calamity could quiet the active spirit of opposition, Mr. Keene, declaring that he did not consider a mere expression of thanks a sufficient testimony of their sense of the Admiral's merits, moved an address, requesting his Majesty to confer on him some signal mark of his royal favour.

Mr. Dundas remonstrated against the interference of the House to take from the hands of the King that which properly belonged to the royal office; and Mr. Pitt observed that the House should not be so carried away by the impulse of feelings, as, amidst the ardour of their acknowledgments, to confound the distinct functions belonging to the different branches of the legislature. He declared the constant readiness and anxious desire of ministers to promote honours and rewards to those by whom they were merited; and Mr. Keene's motion was withdrawn, but not before Mr. Sheridan, in a bitter speech, had denied that in no instance had there appeared in the executive government a want of promptitude to reward the claims of public services; and cited, as an instance, the honourable Admiral himself.

On the motion of Mr. Dundas, the House then unanimously voted thanks, by name, to Vice-Admirals Thompson and Waldegrave, Rear-Admiral Parker, Commodore Nelson, and Captain Calder, and generally to the captains and officers; with their acknowledgments of the services of the seamen, marines, and soldiers on board the fleet.

As was justly anticipated, the favours of the crown and the acknowledgments of the nation were not withheld from those who had so splendidly signaled themselves. Sir John Jervis was advanced to the peerage, with the titles of Baron Jervis of Mexford, the place of his nativity, and Earl Saint Vincent's, from the scene of his glory, and he had a pension of three thousand pounds. Nelson had been included in a recent

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C.

1797.
Precipitate
motion of
Mr. Keene.

Answer of
ministers.

Thanks to
other officers.

Peerage
conferred on
Sir John
Jervis.

Nelson pro-
moted.

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C.

1797.

promotion of rear-admirals, and now received the order of the Bath, while thanks were voted to him by the Irish Parliament, and several of the principal cities and towns in England: and for relief of the widows and orphans of the brave men who fell in the conflict, the merchants of London opened a subscription, which was speedily and amply filled.

CHAPTER THE HUNDRED AND FIRST.

1797.

Conspiracy in the Fleet.—Applications to Earl Howe.—Mutiny at Spithead.—Delegates appointed—their regulations—their petitions.—Lords of the Admiralty go to Portsmouth.—Some demands granted—differences accommodated.—Notice of these transactions in Parliament.—Duke of Bedford.—Effect of these proceedings.—Injudicious order from the Admiralty.—Mutiny renewed at St. Helen's.—Motion of Mr. Pitt—Mr. Fox—Mr. Sheridan.—Bill for increasing seamen's wages.—House of Lords.—Mr. Whitbread's motion.—Mr. Pitt.—Motion amended—and rejected. Earl Howe goes to Portsmouth—his judicious proceedings. Mutiny suppressed.—Fresh mutiny.—Committees formed. Richard Parker their chief—they concentrate at the Nore. Their appeal.—Arrangement proposed by Mr. Sheridan. Mr. Pitt.—Demands of the mutineers.—Answer.—How received.—Alarming progress of the mutiny.—Board of Admiralty at Sheerness.—Intemperate conduct of the delegates.—Progress of the Mutiny.—Alarm in the nation.—Message from the King.—Address supported by Opposition Members.—Bill against incitements to Mutiny.—Observation of Serjeant Adair.—Bill passed.—Bill for restraining intercourse with the mutineers.—Sir John Sinclair—Sir Francis Burdett—Mr. Sturt—Mr. Baker—Bill passes—Proclamation.—Order of the Admiralty.—Further measures.—Effect on the mutineers.—Communication through Lord Northeske.—Disunion among the mutineers.—Exertions against them.—The mutiny begins to dissolve—and is

finally suppressed.—Apprehension and fate of Parker.—Others pardoned.—Motions against ministers.—In the City of London.—Motion by Mr. Whitbread concerning Ireland.—Mr. Grey.—Mr. Windham.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Sturt. Motion negatived.—Motion by the Earl of Albemarle. Lord Moira.—Lord Suffolk's motion against Mr. Pitt.—Explanations concerning Lord Rodney.—The Earl of Moira.—Marquis of Lansdowne.—Motion lost.—Motion by Alderman Harvey Combe.—Alderman Curtis.—Motion by the Duke of Bedford.—Lord Guilford.—Marquis of Lansdowne.—Mr. Grey's motion for Parliamentary Reform.—Arguments.—Mr. Grey.—Mr. Erskine.—Sir Francis Burdett.—Mr. Fox.—His plan.—Mr. Fox's motion to repeal the Sedition Act.—Serjeant Adair.—Motions on peace—by the Earl of Oxford.—The Earl's motion carried away.—His publication.—His motion.—Bishop of Rochester—Rejected.—Motion by Mr. Pollen.—Debate.—Debate on St. Domingo.—Mr. Dundas.—Mr. Bryan Edwards on the Slave Trade.—Mr. Charles Ellis.—Mr. Wilberforce and other Members.—Mr. Wilberforce's motion.—Mr. Bryan Edwards's Bill.—Termination of the session.

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1797.
Conspiracy in
the fleet.

FROM these scenes of glory and exultation, it becomes necessary to turn to others of an opposite description, fraught with alarm, danger, and disgrace, originating also in the navy. A spirit of discontent had found its way among the seamen, whose complaints, not in all respects unreasonable, were put in motion by means destructive of discipline and subordination, by confederacies and delegations, making the self-will of aspiring individuals the rule of conduct for whole bodies, and emancipating those who joined in them from all the control of their legal superiors. A combination so new in a British fleet could not exist without many attempts to ascertain the means by which it had been formed and consolidated: little doubt was entertained that it was supported, if not contrived, by factious persons on shore, and fostered principally among active-minded, intelligent landmen,

whom high bounties and the measures taken to recruit the fleets by parochial quotas had thrown into a new situation, affording scope to their talents for intrigue and powers of persuasion.

Infirm in health, and at the advanced age of seventy-two, Earl Howe had retired to Bath, with the resolution of declining further actual service, when he received four petitions, as they were termed, purporting to issue from different ships, but all in the same words, decently expressed, and without signature. They contained merely a request of the noble admiral's interposition with the Lords of the Admiralty, to obtain for the seamen an increase of pay, and means of providing for their wives and families, which, at present, could only be effected by direct remittance when they received their allowances. The noble admiral deemed them to be all written by the same person; the effort of some rash or malignant individual to create uneasiness: he shewed them to a lord of the Admiralty, and sent them to his official residence, to be laid before the board. His opinion was confirmed by Sir Peter Parker, the Port Admiral, and Lord Bridport, who commanded the fleet; and, therefore, both he and Lord Spencer abstained from taking any notice of communications from persons undescribed and unknown*.

After some time, it was disclosed that a regular plan had been organized for taking the ships from the command of their officers, and that the day for the operation was fixed and near at hand. Orders were immediately sent by telegraph for the ships to put to sea; but when Lord Bridport made the necessary signal, the crew of the flag ship, the Queen Charlotte, ran up the shrouds, and gave three cheers; those of the other ships responded to the signal, and, notwithstanding the arguments and persuasions of their officers, persisted in the resolution that not an anchor should be lifted until their grievances were redressed. All command being thus taken from the officers, two delegates were chosen in each ship, and sent on board

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Applications
to Earl Howe.

March 4.

Mutiny at
Spithead.

April 12.

15th.

Delegates
appointed.

* So stated by the noble Earl in the House of Lords on the 3rd of May. Debates, vol. xxxiii. page 474.

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CL.

1797.
Their
regulations.

the Queen Charlotte, to hold sittings in the admiral's state cabin. Their first act of authority was to issue rules and orders for the government of the ships under their command; rules of which some were highly reasonable and even laudable; but others sufficiently tyrannical to shew the evils which must ever attend usurped and unconstitutional authority. Those which related to points of practical discipline, such as the proper returns of watch, restraint from going on shore, obedience to command, and against the introduction of spirituous liquors, were just and necessary; but no intercourse was to be allowed between ship and ship; no private letters were to be sent on shore; no ship was to lift an anchor until the desires of the fleet should be satisfied, and every seaman and marine was to take an oath of fidelity to the delegates and to the fleet in general*. For the breach of any of these vague and indefinite articles, the punishment of death was not distinctly denounced; but, to inspire an apprehension of it, ropes were reeved to the main and fore-yard arms of every vessel, and used in ducking minor delinquents. Officers, who were disliked by the delegates, were sent on shore; but the mutineers permitted all frigates with convoys to sail, that commerce might not be impeded.

April 18.
Their
petitions.

To define their expectations, the delegates prepared a petition, which they addressed to the citizens and burgesses in Parliament assembled, and another to the Lords of the Admiralty. In the first, they represented that their wages had been fixed by a statute in the reign of Charles the Second, since which the necessaries of life had advanced at least thirty per cent., and hoped for proper amendments; they complained of the neglect they had experienced from Lord Howe, and professing that, in loyalty and zeal for the defence of their country, they were not inferior to the army or militia; they considered themselves equally intitled to his Majesty's munificence; they mentioned also the deficient weight and measure of

* Annual Register, vol. xxxix. page *395.

their provisions, the care of them when sick, the stoppage of their pay when wounded, and their detention on board when in harbour, by which they were deprived of the sweets of liberty. In conclusion, to convince the nation at large that they knew when to cease to ask, as well as to begin, and that they required only what was moderate, and not detrimental to the nation, or injurious to the service, they declared an unanimous resolution, that no further complaints of grievances should be received.

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Before the date of these papers, a Board of Admiralty, consisting of Lord Spencer, Lord Arden, and Rear-Admiral Young, had proceeded to Portsmouth; and, after a long discussion with Lord Bridport, and Admirals Sir Alan Gardner, Colpoys, Pole, and Holloway, in which they all acknowledged the necessity of granting some of the terms required, the three last-named admirals, by order of the Board, had an interview with the delegates on board the Queen Charlotte, offering them a considerable advance of pay. They were answered that the crews would agree to nothing, unless it were sanctioned by Parliament, and guaranteed by the King's proclamation. Disappointed and irritated at this display of stubbornness, Admiral Gardner rashly seized one of the delegates by the collar, and swore he would have them all hanged, with every fifth man throughout the fleet: an act which nearly occasioned his destruction. On reporting these transactions to the crew of the Royal George, all the delegates were summoned on board, by a display of the red or bloody flag, which, as the signal was not understood, struck terror throughout the fleet, and particularly among the officers, who anticipated the most dreadful consequences. The esteemed and respected Lord Bridport struck his flag, declaring his determination never again to display it. Lord Spencer was very urgent that the Board should consent to his going on board the Queen Charlotte, to try the effect of his personal remonstrance and exhortation; but this was unanimously resisted, as derogatory to the First Lord of the Admiralty, and as placing in the hands of muti-

17th.
Lords of the
Admiralty go
to Portsmouth.

21st.

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CI.

1797.

Some demands
granted.

22nd.

neers a stake which would enable them to dictate their own terms. They therefore quitted the place, and proceeded to London.

As if preparing for some vigorous act of hostility, the insurgents loaded all the guns, ordered a regular watch, as when at sea, and kept every officer to his ship; but soon, Lord Bridport having received authority to concede, in a more satisfactory form, some of the points required, the delegates wrote to the Admiralty, explaining the cause of their late conduct, and declaring that, with hearts full of gratitude and satisfaction, they received the bountiful augmentation of pay and provisions which had been allowed. "But," they added, "we beg leave to remind your lordships that "it is a firm resolution that, until the flour in port be "removed, the vegetables and pensions augmented, "the grievances of private ships redressed, an act "passed, and his Majesty's gracious pardon for the "fleet now lying at Spithead be granted, the fleet "will not lift an anchor: and this is the total and "final answer." They also wrote to Lord Bridport, whom they addressed as their father and their friend, and disclaimed all intention of offending him. His lordship, on this, returned to his ship, hoisted his flag, and, after an address to the crew, in which he told them that the effect of the late events would be the means of hurrying him shortly to the grave, informed them that he had brought a redress of their grievances. The points which were further required were also conceded; the delegates insisted that they would not take the word of the Lords of the Admiralty for the pardon; and it therefore became necessary to advise his Majesty to grant it under his sign manual. A proclamation was accordingly dispatched to Portsmouth without delay, read on board several ships, and received with three cheers. The Queen Charlotte's people, however, with the delegates on board, insisted on seeing the original instrument, which fortunately had been sent down with the printed copies; and, upon this, the insignia of rebellion were struck; the crews declared themselves ready to perform whatever

Differences
accommo-
dated.

their officers should command; and the first act of their obedience was, to proceed with a division of the fleet to Saint Helen's.

This calm was but of short duration. In consequence of some parliamentary and official proceedings, the sailors were led to apprehend that the faith of government would be broken. On the motion respecting the loans to the Emperor and to Ireland, Mr. Fox took occasion to observe, that it was necessary the House should receive official information on the mutiny in the fleet; an inevitable consequence of which would be a considerable expense, and which had created more uneasiness in the mind of every thinking man than he chose to express. For the present, Mr. Pitt avoided discussion, by promising that, in the course of a day or two, a vote of money would be proposed.

In the upper House, the Duke of Bedford announced, that, if no communication was made by ministers, he should originate an inquiry, by moving for the production of papers. Earl Spencer declared that he had no command from his Majesty to make any communication. Earl Howe explained, and justified his own conduct, but expressed a wish that, for the sake of the service, the business had never been brought under discussion; for the legislature must either approve of transactions which every man must wish never to have happened, or they must, by withholding that approbation, acknowledge that they had made concessions, under the pressure of the moment, which they thought it improper to confirm. The Duke of Clarence deprecated such a discussion, as pregnant with most dangerous consequences to the service. Similar opinions were expressed by Lord Sydney and Lord Grenville; and an adjournment was moved and agreed to: but, previously, the Earl of Carlisle strongly enforced the necessity, if not at the present, at some future moment, of investigating the cause and progress of these most serious events, which had shaken the pillars of the state to their very foundation. The Duke of Bedford, yielding with the worst possible grace to the evident feeling of the House, declared, that if he could conceive any terms

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CI.

1797.

Notice of
these transac-
tions in
Parliament.

May 1.
Mr. Fox.

3rd.
Duke of
Bedford.

CHAP.
CI.

1797.

in which he could couch a motion for the production of papers, he would make it then. The transactions, however, were without a parallel in history ; there was no antecedent instance in which the King's ministers had entered into correspondence and negotiation with any body of his subjects.

Effect of these
proceedings.

These discussions and the reports, with comments made upon them, were calculated to stimulate the spirit of opposition already displayed ; and another ground was afforded by an order from the Board of Admiralty, containing injudicious and irritating paragraphs. It stated that, "from the disposition lately shown by the seamen in several ships, it had become highly necessary that the strictest attention should be paid by all officers to their own conduct, and that of the men under them, in order the more effectually to ensure a proper subordination and discipline, and to prevent, as far as might be, all discontent among the seamen." Unnecessary as this was at any time, as both articles of war and instructions enjoin it, such an order, at this particular moment, reflecting on the conduct of both officers and men, was, to say the least of it, indiscreet and inexpedient. But it was followed by a new instruction for all captains—"To see that the arms and ammunition, belonging to the marines, be constantly kept fit for immediate service, as well in harbour as at sea." This was evidently pointed at the employment of marines to quell any mutinous movement among the seamen ; and, lest they should not so understand it, the following paragraph was added :—"That the captains and commanders be ready, on the first appearance of mutiny, to use the most vigorous means to suppress it, and to bring the ringleaders to punishment."

May 1st.
Injudicious
order from the
Admiralty.

7th.
Mutiny re-
newed at
St. Helen's.

Thus influenced and impelled, the crews again assumed the attitude of resistance and defiance ; those at St. Helen's appointed delegates, and took the command from their officers, and dispatched some of their body to visit the London and Marlborough, which still remained at Spithead. In obedience to his instructions, Admiral Colpoys refused to admit them, ordered the officers to be armed, the marines to be

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CL.

1797.

in readiness, and the ports to be let down; neither would he allow the boats of the delegates to come alongside. The seamen of the *London*, after consulting together, resolved they should be received: the officers resisted, and ordered the men to go below: some refused, and one man began to unleash a gun, to point it aft toward the quarter-deck; one of the lieutenants, after giving him a proper caution, fired a pistol and shot him dead. The men rushed to arms, and, overpowering the officers, and being joined by the marines, were proceeding to hang the lieutenant; but the admiral, taking on himself the blame, if blame there was, as the officer acted under his orders, which he had received from the Admiralty, and the chaplain and surgeon adding their intercessions, the lieutenant's life was saved.

The mutineers weighed anchor in the two ships, and joined the fleet at St. Helen's. Here, it is said, that one of the ship's companies talked openly of carrying her to France; but when this was made known to the delegates, they threatened immediate destruction to that ship, if any such language was continued; and, in order to prevent her from holding any communication with the shore (from whence it was supposed the suggestion was derived), guard-boats were stationed around her night and day. The mutineers began, however, to send on shore all officers who were not agreeable to them, so that the ships were wholly in their possession; and it became evident that some decisive measure must be adopted, to set the minds of the seamen at ease with regard to the measures in progress and nearly complete for acquiescing in their demands, and for conceding every point at issue.

Before the commencement of this new sedition, Mr. Pitt had prepared, and just after its appearance he submitted to Parliament, a statement of the intended augmentation of wages, and an estimate of the expense to be incurred: the annual amount would be £536,000; but for the current year, only £372,000 would be required; and, in moving for that sum, he

5th.
Motion of
Mr. Pitt.

CHAP.
CL.

1797.

acknowledged the embarrassment he felt ; explanations might justly be expected ; but from every view of prudence and policy, and with every possible attention to the delicacy of the case, he should rather rely on, and even claim, the silent indulgence of the House, than enter into any detail.

Mr. Fox.

If, when he expressed a hope for a silent vote, the minister meant any thing more than a wish, he was speedily undeceived. Mr. Fox declared that he could not silently accede to the resolution without betraying his constituents. Not to discussion, but to silence, were the present difficulties to be attributed. Had the House interposed at the commencement of this business, instead of permitting the scandalous delay of a fortnight, for which delay he hoped ministers would be made seriously to answer, they would not have heard of the misfortunes which had recently happened. Misrepresentation, and consequent misunderstanding, were said to have arisen from debate ; but secrecy was seldom, if ever, so good a mode of avoiding misunderstanding as discussion. The Admiralty neither denied nor granted the demands, but endeavoured to bargain with the seamen, to offer less than it was reasonable they should have, since it was less than now proposed to be voted ; thus increasing, instead of diminishing, their suspicions. The minister ought to state the circumstances which led to the misunderstanding between the fleet and the Admiralty, after the first promise was made, that Parliament might know whether the vote before them was a complete or a partial compliance. To endeavour to pass it by in silence was silly ; the House would resemble children, who shut their eyes and think nobody can see them.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Sheridan reproached ministers for not having proposed the vote sooner : the conciliation would be more effectual, if accompanied with a vote of censure on their delay. These reflections passed without an answer, and the resolution was voted without a division.

On the ensuing evening, Mr. Whitbread renewed

the attack on the minister, and threatened him with a motion of censure. Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan made vehement speeches on the same side; Mr. Pitt briefly explained his conduct, and, as the motion against him was fixed for the morrow, declared his total indifference as to the time when it might be made, so it did not impede the progress of the business before the House; he obtained, therefore, a message to the Lords, requesting that they would continue assembled for some time; and a bill was brought in, and at one sitting passed through all its stages, for increasing the pay and allowance to seamen and marines.

It passed the Lords with equal celerity, although the Earl of Suffolk urged the complaint that it had not been presented a fortnight earlier. The debate, which was carried on with considerable heat and personality, produced from the Lord Chancellor the observation, that as procrastination was the fault imputed to ministers, those noble lords who were desirous of entering into such discussions partook of the criminality they imputed to others. Delay in passing the bill might put the lives of the best and bravest men in the country in peril: it was like stopping to enquire how a fire was kindled, before they employed the engines to extinguish it. The matters in question could as well be discussed at any other time; and he only asked a truce for one night, that the bill might be passed, and sent to Portsmouth immediately.

Before Mr. Whitbread made his promised motion, Mr. Yorke prudently and patriotically requested a short delay; the country had already suffered much from untimely discussion, and the House should be cautious how they entertained a debate on a topic so delicate, and in its consequences so critical. Such motives had no effect on the inexorable mover. He acknowledged that the crisis was awful beyond example, but could not, consistently with his duty, abstain from proceeding. He only regretted that he had not persevered in moving his vote of censure on the former day; for had it then passed and accompanied the other

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CI.

1797.

9th.
Bill for in-
creasing sea-
men's wages.

House of
Lords.

10th.
Mr. Whit-
bread's
motion.

CHAP.
CI.

1797.

vote to Portsmouth, it would have convinced the seamen that the House had not been a party in that delay to which all the subsequent calamities were to be attributed. He charged on the minister a highly criminal delay, in suffering the concessions made by the Lords of the Admiralty to remain so long without the ratification of Parliament; and, to support this proposition, recurred to all the transactions which had taken place. If he displayed a greater degree of heat than was becoming in one preferring an accusation, he said, it arose from his indignation at finding that, to all the other instances of incapacity, of profusion, and of a dereliction of every honourable and worthy principle by which the present administration had been marked, they had added this new calamity of magnitude unascertained, and consequences incalculable. He moved:—"That the Right Honourable William Pitt, having so long delayed presenting to the House an estimate of the sum necessary to defray the expense for the increase of pay of the seamen and marines, and the proposed issue of full allowance of provisions, had been guilty of a gross neglect of his duty, and deserved their censure."

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Fox, having seconded the motion, Mr. Pitt, disclaiming any desire that blame should be transferred to any other person, observed that it had been no part of his official duty either to present or to prepare, or give directions, for any estimate to be laid before the House. The preparation of it was directed by the order of council, and the several stages through which it must pass took up considerable time. He stated, day by day, the proceedings, from the first intelligence of the mutiny, until the time when the estimate was presented; shewing that, at all the periods of intermediate explanation, there was incontestible evidence of it having been the uniform intention of ministers to complete the engagements made to the seamen. To those who doubted the sincerity of government, he could scarcely condescend to make a reply; it had been evinced in every part of their proceedings. So far as the latest intelligence would permit him to judge,

he entertained the greatest hopes of the seamen having a disposition to return to their duty; from the difficulty of communication to the different ships, owing to the badness of the weather, he had not the means of obtaining the fullest information; but he had ground for hope that tranquillity and order were effectually restored.

CHAP.
Ct.

1797.

The motion was amended by substituting—"His Majesty's ministers" for "the Right Honourable William Pitt," and a slight verbal addition was made by Mr. Fox. It was principally supported by that gentleman, and opposed by Mr. Dundas; some other members spoke, but their observations and explanations conveyed little that was new or interesting, and the division was strongly against it*.

Motion
amended,

and rejected.

In the mean time, at the suggestion, it is said, of the King, Lord Howe was sent to Portsmouth, with full powers to effect, if possible, a final conclusion. The love and high estimation felt toward him in the fleet fully justified this selection, and, although the state of his health would have furnished an unanswerable plea for declining the mission, he obeyed without hesitation the call of duty. His first measure, on his arrival, was to visit all the line-of-battle ships at Spithead and Saint Helen's, to learn from their crews what were their real grievances. The appearance of a commander so honored and beloved, who had so often led them to victory, and had ever shewn himself alive to their feelings, considerate of their peculiarities, and anxious, not only to relieve their real wants, but to accommodate himself to the prominent parts of their character and manners†, could not fail of producing beneficial effects.

Earl Howe
goes to
Portsmouth.

11th.

* 237 to 63.

† A characteristic instance of his judgment and kindness in this respect is given by an observing and highly respectable American author. "Just before the battle with the French fleet (1st June), the sailors expressed a wish for a little more grog. Howe replied: 'Let them wait till it's over, and we'll all get drunk together.'" A Residence at the Court of London, by Richard Rush, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, from the United States of America, p. 388. To those who duly estimate the effect of a benevolent approximation of men in authority to those under their command, this anecdote will not appear too slight and trivial for history.

CHAP.
CI.

1797.
His judicious
proceedings.

12th.

13th.

Mutiny
suppressed.

Earl Howe, who, although rejoiced to hear the sailors in moments of good-humoured familiarity, call him "Black Dick," was not a man to sacrifice the real dignity of his station, and, what is eminently connected with it, the true interests of the state, to any mean or vulgar desire of popularity. He took, without loss of time, the measures essentially necessary for the re-establishment of order and restoration of confidence. He insisted, in the first place, that the seamen should generally express contrition for what had passed, and address to him a petition to interpose his good offices; and, with great address, he managed to obtain a gratification of their wishes for the removal of some of their officers, without seeming to yield it as a point conceded to their force or combination, but granted to their request. He received their petitions on board the Royal William, and saw, with some mortification, that, although he could communicate the act for increasing their pay, and his Majesty's gracious pardon for past offences, difficulties might occur in effecting a further accommodation, from the facility which some malignant persons possessed of working on the unsuspecting minds of the well-disposed seamen. Being, at length, empowered with full authorities from government, and strong in his own popularity, influence, and firmness, the venerable commander succeeded in restoring order and reanimating loyalty, although he suffered the great mortification of seeing an admiral, four captains, and ninety-nine inferior officers, displaced on the demand of these resolute mutineers; but they were put on full pay, until they could be otherwise employed. This triumph, by force of combination and self-will, over the authority they had been so long used to reverence, produced some of their accustomed effects. When matters appeared to be settled, sailors came on shore at Portsmouth, and committed many excesses; four were apprehended for rape and robbery, and an unsuccessful attempt to rescue them was made; but these minor disturbances subsided; the fleet weighed anchor, and sailed for its destination, the coast of Brest, and the mutiny was considered as effectually

CHAP.
CI.

1797.

quelled. Such an event was certainly distasteful to those who looked to the disaffection of the sailors as a sign of derangement in the government which neither force nor policy could restore; who exclaimed, "The revolution in England is begun; stop it who can." The hopes of these politicians were checked by many acts of the sailors during the height of their indiscipline; by their indignant rejection of a proposal to throw themselves into the hands of the enemy; by the deference they paid to those officers who retained a hold on their esteem; and by their reprobation of an indecent expression of disrespect when one of their party had been shot. To the infinite mortification of those who, for so many years, had been delighting the ears of landmen with declamations, the sailors, in their enumeration of grievances, never so much as alluded to the recruiting of the service by impressment, or to the punishment of flogging.

Unhappily, the hopes of perfect accommodation were premature. The mutiny which had been appeased by concession at Portsmouth, broke out with augmented strength, and indications of ferocity, which no longer permitted the doubt before entertained, that the leaders were instigated by wicked and designing men. It began in the Medway, on board the Sandwich, spreading immediately to the Director, and thence to all the ships in that quarter. Many officers were sent on shore, the rest silenced; the red flag was hoisted, and the insurgents possessed themselves of all authority. For their particular government, they formed in each ship a body of twelve persons, whom they styled a committee of vigilance, and, for their general control, a committee of delegates. At the head they placed Richard Parker, a native of Exeter, who had seen some naval service toward the close of the American war; but, being subsequently reduced to poverty, was imprisoned for debt, and obtained his release by entering as a volunteer when the counties were raising seamen for the royal service. He was a man of quick understanding, great presence of mind, and firm determination, and soon acquired a despotic

Fresh
mutiny.

11th.

Committees
formed.

Richard
Parker
their chief.

CHAP.
CI.

1797.

ascendancy over his confederates: in the progress of the mutiny, he was styled Rear-Admiral Parker.

At the beginning of his command, orders were issued that, on pain of imprisonment, no man should leave his ship without a passport, which was called a liberty ticket. The delegates held their meetings at Sheerness, where they paraded the streets with music and banners, and many displays of the insolence of vulgar triumph. From Sheerness, they removed to the Great Nore, as well to concentrate their force, as to be out of the reach of the batteries on shore, which would be employed against them.

They concentrate at the Nore.

Their appeal.

As a motive to this insurrection, and a justification of its instigators, a paper was industriously circulated in the fleet, particularly at Plymouth and Sheerness; it came from the office of the printer who had been usually employed by the delegates, and the original was said to have been delivered to him by the parties themselves. It was entitled, An Appeal to a loyal and discerning nation from the seamen in Lord Bridport's fleet; and, after stating the transactions which had previously occurred, proceeded to assert that, notwithstanding his Majesty's pardon, it was the intention of ministers to select and execute the seamen who had been the principal ringleaders; that schemes were laid to sacrifice some of the brightest gems that ever adorned this or any other country; and that no sooner was that pardon granted, but, in direct contradiction to it, individuals were selected for the express purpose of sacrificing them to malice and private resentment.

Arrangement proposed by Mr. Sheridan. 19th.

On the first rumour of the renewed disturbances, Mr. Sheridan had given notice of a conciliatory motion: his plan was to form a commission, composed of men of all parties and descriptions, which should be empowered to examine the claims of these men, accede to those which appeared to be just, and refuse those which it would be impolitic or dangerous to grant. At the desire of the minister, however, he postponed it in the first instance, and, after a lapse of three days, came to the House with the appeal of the mutineers in his hand, and, in a noble spirit of patriotism, re-

19th.

ceded from his first intent. From internal evidence, he said, this paper could not be the composition of the delegates of Lord Bridport's fleet, although there were certain circumstances of apparent authenticity about it. The sentiments it expressed were not those of British seamen; the style was more like that of a circulating library, than of a fore-castle. It was no more the production of a British seaman, than a British seaman was the enemy of his country. With respect to the calumny itself, it would be an insult to the understanding of the House, were he to suppose the existence of a doubt on the subject; he was no friend to ministers: they had not a more determined, irreconcilable, and inflexible enemy to them and their system; but if he could insinuate that they, or any one of them, could have possibly harboured such a thought as that imputed by this manifesto, after the pardon granted by his Majesty to the seamen, he should deem himself not merely an enemy of ministers, but of the country. He disclaimed any intention of complimenting the House of Commons, from whose decisions he had so often differed; but with respect to good-will toward British seamen, its sentiment had never been different from his own. If ever man loved man, if ever one part of the people loved another, the people of this country loved the seamen; the individuals in that House had ever loved them, and, in that respect, had shewn themselves the representatives of the people. Whatever had been at any period proposed for the benefit of the seamen had been adopted, almost with acclamation. He noticed a foolish and virulent apostrophe in the appeal, directed personally against himself, and, in conclusion, said: "I have ever been the friend of the seamen; but never more so than at this period, in warning them against those artifices which have been practised to seduce them. When people tell them that the navy can be managed without subordination, they may as well tell them a ship can be managed without a rudder; they had better pull down the masts and the shrouds, and lay them on the deck, than listen to such representations."

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CL.

1797.
Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt declared his sincere desire, utterly unqualified either by the past or present hostility of Mr. Sheridan, to acknowledge the fair, candid, and liberal manner in which he had discharged a great public duty. He had spoken justly of the partiality of that House toward seamen, and the enthusiasm with which it had ever adopted all measures tending to promote their interest and advantage. If any one could have taught our seamen to believe that, after his Majesty's pardon, ministers could think of retaining any recollection of past transactions, or of deducting in the smallest degree from that act of oblivion, he must have been actuated by the most diabolical motive. The pardon was most graciously conferred, and meant to be strictly observed. As there was no motion before the House, the conversation was confined to these two speeches.

Demands of
the mutineers.

20th.

In its progress, the mutiny daily assumed appearances more dangerous and alarming. Under the signature of Richard Parker, styling himself President, a paper was issued, as a correct statement of the demands of the sailors at the Nore and Sheerness. Its style was peremptory and dictatorial, and the claims, comprised in eight articles, were sufficient to destroy every sign of subordination in the service. They stipulated that every indulgence granted to the fleet at Portsmouth should be extended to them; that on a ship coming into harbour every man should have liberty (a certain number at a time) to go and visit his friends and family; that, before going to sea, all arrears, down to six months, should be paid; that no officer who had been turned out should again be employed in the same ship, without consent of the company; that, when any ship was paid, the pressed men, who might not be in the regular course of payment, should have two months' advance; that men who had run and were now in the service, should not be treated as deserters; that a more equal distribution of prize-money should be made; and that the articles of war should in many particulars be altered, several to be expunged, and others more moderate

substituted. Finally, it was declared that the committee of delegates of the whole fleet, assembled in council on board the Sandwich, had unanimously agreed that they would not deliver up their charge until some Lords of the Admiralty should appear to ratify their conditions.

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CI.

1797.

To these outrageous demands, a firm, but temperate answer was returned by the Lords of the Admiralty, shewing the impropriety of some, the impracticability of others, and referring some to the law, to the authority of the board, and the admirals in their several stations. Admiral Buckner was commissioned to communicate this paper, and to announce his Majesty's free pardon to those who would return to their duty, which should include all offences committed during the existing disorders. When he went on board the Sandwich to announce his proposals, he was received without any of the marks of respect due to his rank; and finding, from the conduct of the mutineers, that no good effect was to be expected, he departed, and shortly afterward his flag was struck by the mutinous crew. Parker announced to the Admiralty, as the decision of the delegates, that they would not come to any accommodation until their lordships would appear at the Nore and redress their grievances.

22nd.
Answer.

24th.
How received.

25th.

Every day, every hour, now produced fresh acts of violence and demonstrations of implacable hostility. Ships, the crews of which were yet untainted with the principles of revolt, were seized or fired upon, and compelled to join the mutineers. Among others so treated was the San Fiorenzo frigate, which had been fitted up for the purpose of conveying to Germany one of his Majesty's daughters and the prince to whom she had recently been espoused. Fourteen delegates proceeded up the river to persuade the crews of the ships at Long Reach to join the fleet at the Nore; they were fired upon from a fort below Tilbury, and taken into custody at Gravesend; being set at liberty, they prevailed on the crew of the Lancaster of sixty-four guns to join in their combination; but,

Alarming progress of the mutiny.

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CI.

1797.

29th.
Board of
Admiralty at
Sheerness.Intemperate
conduct of the
delegates.Progress of the
mutiny.

for fear of red-hot shot from the batteries at Gravesend, the ship could not be carried away.

Yielding to the evident necessity of the case, and desirous, if possible, to terminate by negotiation this disgraceful contest, Earl Spencer, with other lords of the Admiralty, repaired to Sheerness, and formed a board, at the House of Commissioner Hartwell, where they were met by Parker and twelve more delegates. Offers of pardon and oblivion to those who would return to their duty, made in pursuance of a recent royal proclamation, were rejected with scorn, and the behaviour of the leader exhibited a striking instance of the vulgar ferocity characteristic of a low mind elevated to sudden and undeserved importance*.

Hopeless of success, his lordship and his companions withdrew from this scene of insult to London; the mutineers acted with increasing boldness and violence. They seized upon the *Grampus* and *Serapis* store ships, and took out the stores, stopped a vessel laden with flour, fired at two frigates which had been ordered to put to sea, and committed other acts of plunder and piracy. Encouraged, probably, by the arrival of a part of the north-sea squadron, to take a share in their revolt, they at length had the audacity to blockade the mouth of the Thames; the *Standard*, *Inspector*, *Brilliant*, and *Swan*, being moored for that purpose at equal distances across the entrance of the river. They were soon after reinforced by another portion of Admiral Duncan's fleet, which increased their number to twenty-four or twenty-five sail†. The *Clyde* and *St. Fiorenzo* frigates were, however, fortu-

* In a narrative of the mutiny, the following specimen is given in the *Annual Register*. "In the course of the conference, Lord Spencer asked them, 'rather peevishly, 'What do you want?' Parker answered: 'You are a man of 'sense, and you know what is due to us; you know what we want.' When "Lord Spencer hinted that he must refer their demands to ministers in London, "Parker said: 'Aye, go and consult the ringleaders of your gang;' and as the "delegates were retiring, Parker, in answer to some just admonitions from Lord "Spencer, said, 'You may all be —.' Vol. xxxix. Appendix to the Chronicle, "p. 143.

† The following is a list:—*Sandwich*, 90; *Montague*, 74; *Inflexible*, Director, *Nassau*, *Repulse*, *Belliqueux*, *Standard*, *Lion*, *Monmouth*, and *Ardent*, of 64; *Terpsichore* and *Iris* of 32; *Inspector*, 16; *Brilliant*, 28; *Swan*, 14; *Proserpine*, 28; *Comet*, 14; *Pylades*, 16; *Grampus* and *Serapis* store ships; with some others of smaller force.

nate enough, by the dexterous management of their commanders, to escape; the former running into Sheerness, the latter into Harwich.

Alarm and consternation generally prevailed, but especially in the counties adjacent to the mutiny, and in the capital. Troops were poured into all the towns, and every precaution taken, as though an immediate invasion were apprehended. At Sheerness, where a bombardment from the fleet was expected, numbers of the inhabitants quitted their dwellings or dispatched their families to places of safety. In London, a general gloom and not less indignation prevailed, producing an unusual depression in the value of the public funds.

Measures of vigour having now become obviously indispensable, Lord Grenville and Mr. Dundas laid before their respective houses a message from his Majesty, expressing his deep concern at the violent and treasonable acts persisted in by the crews at the Nore, recommending to consideration a more effectual provision for the prevention and punishment of traitorous attempts to excite sedition and mutiny in the naval service, or to withdraw any part of his sea or land forces from their duty and allegiance, and from obedience and discipline.

An address on this message was moved by Mr. Pitt; and it was truly honourable to the members of opposition, that, not only no party objection was urged, for the purpose of augmenting the distress of government, but several distinguished members declared that they would zealously co-operate in the measures which might be deemed necessary in this awful crisis, although they reserved to themselves the right of dissenting from the acts and opinions of ministers on other occasions. These sentiments were strongly expressed by Mr. Jolliffe and Mr. William Smith; and Mr. Sheridan observed, that, whatever difference in political opinion might prevail among gentlemen in that house, they were now come to a time when his Majesty had an undoubted right to call upon all his subjects, of every rank, class, and description, for

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1797.

Alarm in the
nation.

Message from
the King.
June 1st.

2nd.
Address supported by
opposition
Members.

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1797.

their zealous co-operation in maintaining the due execution of the laws, and in giving every possible efficiency to the measures of government. Complaints against ministers, however just, were at that moment out of the question; and the House was called upon earnestly to unite with his Majesty against the fatal effects that might be produced by perseverance in mutiny and dangerous disobedience. He was, at first, induced to think that the mutineers had acted under the impulse of momentary delusion and mistake; but their subsequent and continued conduct convinced him that something more than delusion operated on their minds, and that a rooted spirit of disobedience had taken place of those manly and loyal sentiments by which they had, on former occasions, been animated. If there was, indeed, a rot in the wooden walls of old England, our decay could not be very distant. The question was not about this or that concession, but whether the country should be laid prostrate at the feet of France? and it was a matter of no moment whether it was laid prostrate at the feet of monarchical or republican France, for still the event would be equally fatal, equally destructive.

Bill against incitements to mutiny.

In both houses, the address was voted without dissent; and Mr. Pitt immediately moved for leave to bring in a bill for the better prevention and punishment of attempts to seduce persons serving in the sea or land forces, and the other purposes indicated in his Majesty's message. From his official situation, he had become acquainted with various circumstances, demonstrating, from the events which had taken place, and every gentleman must know, that, by emissaries working at secret hours, by the hand-bills which had been industriously dispersed in every part where they were likely to attract the attention of the soldiers, the engines of sedition had been no less busy on shore, where, to the honour of the soldiery, they had failed, than in the navy, where they had, unfortunately, been successful. The discontents on board the fleet, connected with the other species of sedition on shore, proved them to be part of a fatal and deeply digested

system; that they were not the effects of accident, was demonstrated by the conformity of the transactions at Newcastle, Nottingham, Maidstone, Canterbury, Salisbury, and many other places where the same species of hand-bills had been scattered about, accompanied with false and scandalous rumours. No statute had, as yet, adequately provided for this offence; for the statute law had never endeavoured to search out every possible mode of misconduct, and provide for its prevention and punishment. Statutes were not the result of a systematic code, but had grown by an accumulation of provisions made to suit offences as they occurred. As the best and most effectual way of proceeding against such offenders, he proposed to treat any attempt to excite sedition and mutiny in his Majesty's service, or to withdraw any part of his sea or land forces from their duty and allegiance, as an aggravated species of misdemeanor, punishable, at the discretion of the court, with fine and imprisonment; or even, as circumstances might require, with transportation.

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On this motion, the only discussion which arose proceeded from an intimation by Serjeant Adair, that the offence ought to be more exactly defined, the duration of the act limited, and the punishment capital, with speedy execution. The last of these propositions was combated by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Spencer Perceval, and the Master of the Rolls, and the two former adopted in the committee. The bill passed, almost without a debate, for the leading members of opposition ostentatiously absented themselves.

Observations of
Serjeant Adair.

3rd.
Bill passed.

Mr. Pitt next introduced a bill for restraining intercourse with the ships engaged in mutiny. Describing the state of this portion of the navy, he invoked the legislature to empower government to preclude the mutineers from holding any intercourse with those shores which they had so grossly insulted, and whose safety they were so imminently endangering. It was the duty of the legislature, however, while they adopted measures to facilitate the discovery, expedite the trial, and secure the punishment of the instigators,

Bill for re-
straining inter-
course with the
mutineers.

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CL.

1797.

and to repress the mutiny itself, to leave a door of reconciliation open to those objects of seduction who, by returning to their duty in time, might be restored to the favour of their justly offended country. He proposed, therefore, a bill, declaring that, after a certain proclamation should have been issued, and read in the dock-yards, any person who should hold intercourse with the ships in a state of mutiny should be guilty of felony; and that all sailors who, after the date of that proclamation, should not return to their duty, should be deprived of all arrears of pay and allowances, and excluded from all benefit from Greenwich Hospital and the chest of Chatham.

5th.
Sir John
Sinclair.

On the motion for going into a committee, Sir John Sinclair said that by such a bill the House might be said to pass the Rubicon; the minister had not only drawn the sword and thrown away the scabbard, but had pushed his punishments so far, that it appeared doubtful whether he would not expatriate the British navy. That terror might be united with conciliation, it would be right to appoint commissioners, invested with power to suspend the acts whenever the mutinous crews should return to their duty.

Mr. Pitt.

To this objection, for it never assumed the shape of a motion of amendment, Mr. Pitt answered, that if the Rubicon was passed, it was by those who had been guilty of open violation of the laws, and hostile attacks on the very existence of the country, not to the legislature that was about to enact provisions to subdue rebellion. It was intended to authorize the lords of the Admiralty, or any three of them, to accept the submission of the crews, or of individuals; to declare them no longer in a state of mutiny, and to exempt them from all pains and penalties.

Sir Francis
Burdett.

On the motion for the report of the committee, Sir Francis Burdett, who had made his first speech in Parliament during the present session*, strenuously opposed the bill; its necessity was shewn only by the bare assertion of ministers; and a law of this nature

* 23rd March.

should never pass on such grounds. It might render accommodation impracticable, by reducing the seamen to desperation. Discontent prevailed in other quarters beside the navy; the strong laws made to repress the expression of public feeling were symptoms of great disease, caused by the misconduct of administration, particularly during the last four years, and the enormous corruption of the executive government. The only remedy was, to petition the King to dismiss his ministers, and to pursue measures calculated to terminate our present shameful corruption; to increase penal laws would only inflame those who were already irritated, and increase, instead of diminishing, the evil.

If the declaration of these opinions might be considered unnecessary on the present occasion, the speech and conduct of Mr. Sturt, on the motion for a third reading, were open to observations much more serious, if they were not restrained by the ludicrous termination of his exertions. He attributed the conduct of the sailors at Spithead to the tyrannical measures adopted in Ireland. Deserving and innocent men, driven into exile by the contemptible government of that kingdom, were forced to go on board ships, although they had never before been at sea; through resentment, they instilled discontent into the minds of the seamen, and they had gone farther than was intended. Nothing would restore harmony and confidence but the repeal of those tyrannical and diabolical bills; the sedition— The Speaker called to order: the bills constituted a part of the laws of the country, and could not be spoken of in that manner.

Mr. Sturt.

Mr. Sturt, in continuation, said he opposed this bill because the laws in force were fully sufficient to correct the evil. Out of thirty-six articles of war, seventeen were absolutely penal, and there was no reason for adding to their force.

Mr. Baker having intimated that such inflammatory language, unbecoming any subject, and calculated to encourage the seamen in their mutinous proceedings, was not to have been expected from a gentleman

Mr. Baker.

CHAP. CI.	who had himself once borne a naval character, and might, perhaps, even now have a commission. Mr.
1797.	Sturt charged him with having insinuated in that place what he would not dare to insinuate elsewhere, and declared that he would take the sense of the House on the bill: tellers for the ayes were appointed; Mr. Sturt was nominated as one for the other side, but no member could be found to join him; no division,
Bill passes.	therefore, took place, and the bill passed unanimously.
6th. Proclamation.	Without delay, a royal proclamation issued, authorizing the Lords of the Admiralty to take such measures as the contingency required; and, on the next day, they issued an order, declaring the offending crews to be in a state of mutiny and rebellion, warning all his Majesty's subjects against any communication or intercourse, whether personally or by letter, message, or otherwise, with them or with any person remaining on board, and wilfully supplying, comforting, or assisting them, under the penalties designated by the statutes. All wages, pay, and rights were taken from the mutineers; and, for the purpose of enabling them to tender submission, Admiral Buckner was excepted, as a person with whom intercourse might be maintained.
7th. Order of the Admiralty.	
Further measures.	Mere proclamations were not expected to effect an instantaneous suppression of an insurrection so formidable that the enemy exultingly termed the mutinous ships a floating republic; and measures of greater rigour were speedily enforced. The Neptune and other ships were armed, and placed under the command of Sir Erasmus Gower; numerous gun-boats were fitted out, a mortar battery was erected on the isle of Grain, at a spot where shells could be thrown among the rebels, and the shore was carefully guarded, to prevent the seamen from landing to obtain fresh provisions, and especially water, of which they stood in great need, and, lastly, not without some peril in performing the task, all the buoys and beacons were removed, which point out the only navigable passes through the labyrinth of sands at the mouth of the Thames. These energetic measures are said to have originated in a

suggestion from Mr. Sheridan to Mr. Dundas*; but, whether that fact is correct or not, the conduct pursued by that gentleman during this unhappy transaction does him the highest honour, as it shews him endowed with a sufficient portion of patriotic liberality to break loose from the ties of party, and prove himself, in the hour of necessity, a true friend to the country, although adverse to the administration.

These demonstrations, aided by other causes, produced some shew of a disposition on the part of the mutineers to conciliate a justly offended government, although a confidence in their own strength still kept them elevated to a high pitch of insolence. While the two bills were rapidly passing through the Houses of Parliament, the delegates of the Monmouth came on board, and informed the captain, Lord Northesk, who had been detained as a prisoner, that "it was the pleasure of the committee that he should accompany them to the flag-ship, as they had proposals to make toward an accommodation." Attended by one officer, he was introduced to the committee sitting in the state cabin of the Sandwich, and, after some insolent queries respecting the person who came with him, informed by the president, Parker, that they had framed a declaration of the terms on which alone, without the smallest alteration, they would give up the ships; and he was to return in fifty-four hours with a clear and positive answer. A letter to the King was read to him, complimentary to his Majesty, and abusive of his ministers; and, in another to himself, he was authorized and ordered to wait on the King wherever he might be, and to deliver an answer within the time prescribed. His lordship accepted the mission, with observations that he did not anticipate any favourable result: he was introduced by Earl Spencer to the King, and received from the Lords of the Admiralty the short and formal resolve, that nothing but repentance and unconditional submission would be accepted.

This display, on the part of the delegates, was less an exhibition of real courage than of fear aiming at

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Effect on the
mutineers.

6th.
Communica-
tion through
Lord
Northesk.

* Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. ii. page 271.

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CI.1797.
Disunion
among the
mutineers.

an appearance of that character. Divisions of opinion had always existed among the mutineers, and every new occurrence tended to weaken the domination of Parker and his ferocious adherents. A portion of the crews had never heartily joined in the mutiny, but were controlled and restrained by others; of them many retained the feelings of British seamen, and longed to see themselves again hailed and respected as the ornaments and safeguard of their country. So prevalent was this feeling, that an intimation of carrying the fleet into a French port was rejected with universal horror. They found that the country was unanimously against them, and, even before intercourse was prohibited, they laboured under a great want of the most ordinary supplies. Difficulties increased from day to day, while the capricious temper, the suspicious vigilance, and the arbitrary severity of Parker, engendered and fostered a general spirit of disgust.

Exertions
against them.

The resolution of government was well sustained by the zeal of the nation. Officers and seamen, in great numbers, presented themselves to man the vessels which were preparing; the directors of the East India Company invited all the officers in their service, then in England, to assist on this momentous occasion; and the merchants, ship-owners, and underwriters at a public meeting, resolved that, thenceforth, no seamen should be employed in the merchant service who could not produce a certificate from his former commander, or a commander in the navy, of his orderly and obedient conduct; or, in case of his having had any share in the present disturbances, of his having returned to his duty, and of his submission having been accepted, as required by the act of Parliament. This resolution presented to their view the gloomy prospect of exclusion from all beneficial employment in time of peace. While these appearances tended to depress their spirits, the conduct of the sailors in other squadrons did not tend to their elevation. Those at Sheerness were decidedly hostile to them, and the crews of the ships at Plymouth, and of Sir Roger Curtis's squadron at Spithead, sent ad-

dresses, calling on them to return to their duty, and justly branding their conduct as being a "scandal to the name of British seamen."

Strong difference of opinion, became more and more manifest. The acts of Parliament and the proclamation, which had been kept from the knowledge of the people, were generally disclosed, and occasioned violent debates, in which the ascendancy was evidently acquired by the orderly and well-disposed; and a surrender was openly mentioned. The first movement toward this event was that the Lancaster and the Naiad, in the Long Reach at the Nore, the Serapis store-ship of forty-four guns, and the Discovery transport, effected their escape; they were followed by the Firm, gun-boat, Captain Pine, which got away by cutting both cables, in dead of night, and during a heavy gale. 9th. At length the Repulse and the Leopard returned to their duty; their crews having, at the head of the tide, cut their cables, and let the ships drift away from the main body; both grounded, the Leopard was soon got off, but the Repulse, less fortunate, was exposed in her helpless position, to a heavy fire from the Monmouth, Director, and other vessels; and the slaughter would probably have been terrible, had not the officers humanely ordered the men below, and taken upon themselves the direction of the vessel. After being thus exposed for an hour and a half, she got off and made good her retreat to Sheerness. In the night, and in the following morning, this example was followed by the Ardent and two other ships, which reached the Medway in safety. The others separated into two divisions, hoisting different flags; part expressing a resolution to abide by the cause to the last, and part only standing out for a general pardon. Flags of truce were sent on shore with offers of submission upon terms; but such offers were steadily refused. As some proof of their pacific wishes, the mutineers allowed the detained merchantmen to proceed up the Thames. Two days were spent in tumult and consternation, at the end of which time all ideas of holding out were abandoned. Every morning and evening

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CI.

1797.
The mutiny
begins to
dissolve.

12th.

CHAP.
CL.

15th.
and is finally
suppressed.

witnessed the submission of one or two vessels; and, finally, the last ensign of rebellion was struck; the Sandwich, the flag-ship of the mutineers, coming to anchor under the batteries, and giving up the leaders of the revolt. Pardon was extended to the crews; but the delegates were imprisoned, to await the decision of government.

Apprehension
and fate of
Parker.

Richard Parker, so conspicuous in this flagitious transaction, finding his condition hopeless, surrendered to four of the crew of the Sandwich; and a small party, dispatched by Admiral Buckner, escorted him to shore, to protect him from the populace, who shewed their disgust by hissings and insults. He was tried by a court-martial, which pronounced that all the charges were fully proved, and adjudged him to suffer death. He was accordingly hung at the yard-arm of the Sandwich, the principal scene of his authority and his crime. His conduct, from the moment of his surrender, was marked with great propriety; he affirmed the correctness of his intentions, and that he was not a first mover, but pressed into the confederacy; assumed credit for having prevented the sailing of the fleet to an enemy's port; and denied that he had any instigators or advisers on shore. He was, at all times, calm, placid, and unaffected, undisturbed by passion, and undisgraced by complaint, and to his last moment his courage never failed.

22nd.

25th.

Others par-
doned.

Many of his associates were taken in custody; some suffered different sentences according to law; but his Majesty availed himself of the first naval triumph of his arms to extend to the residue a free pardon*.

Motion against
Ministers.

From an early period of the session, as well as during the late awful crisis, motions had been made in both houses, censuring the conduct of ministers, and requiring their removal. In these efforts the City of London took a share, each party claiming alternate success. In the court of Common Council, an address

Feb. 2nd.
In the City of
London.

* These facts are derived from the Annual Register, vol. xxxix. c. 11. Appendix to the Chronicle, p. 140; State Papers, p. 378. Life of Earl Howe by Sir John Barrow, c. 10, and for some judicious remarks on the improved condition of the seamen since this lamented event, same vol. p. 355.

was carried on the abrupt conclusion of the negotiation for peace, pledging the resources of the City in the vigorous prosecution of the war; but afterward, at a Common Hall, summoned on the requisition of forty-three of the livery, it was almost unanimously voted, to present to his Majesty, on his throne, a petition and address, praying him to dismiss his present ministers from his councils for ever, as the first step toward obtaining a speedy, honourable, and permanent peace. To this requisition, communicated through the Duke of Portland, the answer, of course, was, that no petition from the City of London could be received, except in its corporate capacity; but it might be presented at the levee, in the ordinary manner. The Sheriffs were then directed to obtain a personal audience, to represent that it was the privilege of the livery to present petitions to the sovereign on the throne; but his Majesty in person confirmed the message before delivered.

CHAP.
CI.

1797.
March 23rd.

24th.
April 1st.

While this feeble attempt was preparing, Mr. Whitbread moved in the House of Commons for a committee to inquire into the measures taken for the protection of Ireland at the time of the late attempt at invasion. Information had been received through various channels that Ireland was an object of meditated attack; but no measures had been taken toward its defence. As a precedent for the proposed proceeding, he cited the conduct of Speaker Onslow, who, on presenting the bill of supplies, after the failure of the fleet in the Mediterranean, in 1745, told the highest authority in the country that, "under such circumstances, it would have been unbecoming and unpardonable in the House of Commons not to have made this foul miscarriage the subject of their ancient, constitutional, and necessary power of inquiry into every public service."

March 3rd.
Motion by
Mr. Whitbread
concerning
Ireland.

Mr. Dundas rejoiced at the opportunity thus afforded of refuting the misrepresentations which had been industriously circulated. He gave a detailed statement of the state of preparation, the course of attack, and the means of repulse. It had been said

Mr. Dundas.

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CI.

1797.

that we were obliged to the elements for the dispersion of the enemy's fleet: true; but, on the other hand, to the elements, and to the elements only, the French had been indebted for every part of that expedition; although, before the sailing of the Brest fleet, the Admiralty had received intelligence of its preparation, it was not positively known whether it was intended for Portugal or Ireland; and in this uncertainty, the orders and arrangements had been most wise and proper. The government and force of the country had been libelled and calumniated; he did not wish to prevent inquiry; but would make a motion for the previous question, that it might be followed by one for the production of the papers relative to the transaction, in order to ascertain whether the aspersions were well founded or not.

Mr. Grey.

Mr. Grey supported the original motion, observing, that in Sir John Jervis's late glorious achievement, ministers had been highly to blame in leaving him with a force apparently so inferior to the enemy. In the brilliancy of that victory, administration had no share; and such he believed was the opinion of the gallant admiral himself. Owing to the neglect of ministers, the enemy's fleet remained fourteen days off the coast of Ireland unmolested; and had they not met with bad weather, nothing would have prevented them from making themselves masters of Cork, and destroying twelve months' provisions and stores for the navy. The loyalty of the people, he said, was, indeed, meritorious, in proportion to the few obligations which they were under to government; he condemned the restrictions on the Catholics, and insisted that the discontents of Ireland would be much increased by the neglects the country had experienced from administration.

Mr. Windham.

On this style of reasoning, Mr. Windham said, that, although he did not charge gentlemen in opposition with any evil intention, they ought to recollect, that observations indicating what parts were most liable to attack, might convey information to the enemy, as well as expose the negligence of ministers.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox treated this as a stale and profligate ar-

gument, always used against those who opposed the measures of administration ; if it could prevail, instead of the oath against transubstantiation, members should swear never to say any thing against the conduct of the executive government. With augmented vehemence he dwelt on the condition of this country and of Ireland ; but Mr. Sturt, who exceeded him in violence, as much as he fell short of him in eloquence, said he was astonished at nothing that Mr. Dundas asserted ; so great was his boldness, confidence, and assurance. He hoped, in God, he would not much longer have the direction of naval affairs. He might twist and toss his head about ; but he hoped it would be soon twisted somewhere else.

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Mr. Sturt.

After a short explanation from Mr. Pitt, who, in concluding, complained of the violent and inflammatory language used respecting Ireland, and especially the Catholics, the previous question was negatived*.

Motion
negatived.

Many of these arguments and assertions were repeated in the House of Lords, on a motion by the Earl of Albemarle, similar in its effect to that of Mr. Whitbread. Ministers received unexpected support from a peer of undoubted intelligence on the affairs of Ireland, and who generally was numbered among their opponents. The Earl of Moira, having amply reviewed the state of Ireland, and the means produced for its defence on the late occasion, attested that nothing which human prudence was capable of had been omitted, and fully absolved the administration from all censure. The motion was rejected†.

16th.
Motion by the
Earl of
Albemarle.

Lord Moira.

Advancing more directly toward the sentiments of the Common Council, the Earl of Suffolk moved an address for the dismissal of the First Lord of the Treasury, whose pernicious and unconstitutional measures no longer entitled him to the confidence of the nation. He assigned, as grounds for his motion, the neglect of proper means of internal defence ; the treatment experienced by those gallant veterans who had distinguished themselves in fighting for their country, in-

27th.
Lord Suffolk's
motion against
Mr. Pitt.

* 209 to 62.

† 94 to 15.

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1797.

standing Lord Rodney, who, but for the protection afforded by his peerage, must probably have ended his days in a gaol; Lord Howe, who had obtained no remuneration for his splendid victory but the thanks of Parliament; and Sir Charles Grey, who, from the ill-treatment he had received, had determined not to serve again, except on the express command of his sovereign. His lordship noticed also the recall of Earl Fitzwilliam; and the impropriety of having formed connexions with foreign courts, by which so much of the wealth of the country was drained away. He dwelt on the duplicity of those courts, as displayed in the treaty of Pilnitz, and the miserable situation to which the nation was reduced by an obstinate perseverance in a most calamitous war. Public affairs ought no longer to be left in the hands of a man who had shewn himself totally incapable in every respect, except in the arts of deception and delusion.

Explanations
concerning
Lord Rodney.

On this excursive denunciation several peers gave their opinions. Lord Grenville answered the complaints in a clear and methodical manner. With respect to Lord Rodney's remuneration, he observed that the present ministers were not in office in 1782, and the noble admiral's family were perfectly satisfied with the provision that had been made for them since his death. The Marquis of Lansdowne added, that he was in office at the time, when every thing which could be construed liberal and just was done; and the Earl of Suffolk withdrew part of his charge on that head, only maintaining that, from a variety of law-suits, the noble admiral had been reduced to great poverty, and his body seized upon and denied the rites of burial.

The Earls of Warwick and Romney, in opposing the motion, uttered sentiments of truly British firmness and liberality; while the Duke of Norfolk argued that proofs of the delinquency of ministers presented themselves to every eye, and made an impression on every heart. They composed a living epitaph on their folly and infatuation, and, in the language applied to the memory of Sir Christopher Wren, for that astonishing

piece of architecture, the Cathedral of Saint Paul, he might exclaim, "Si monumentum quæris circum-spice."

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Ministers had not, on this, as on a recent occasion, the support of the Earl of Moira; he censured their management in every particular. The war had been misconducted in the most shameful manner, the wealth and resources of the country having been lavished on distant conquests, when the French should have been attacked with all our force nearer home.

The Earl of
Moira.

The Marquis of Lansdowne had no confidence in a mere change of men; he was for a strong executive, and a vigilant independent legislature, mutually checking each other. It was the fashion for ministers to insinuate that those who recommended any change were Jacobins; but he had always advised ministers against Jacobin principles, because he was convinced they went to a community of goods, and every absurd and pernicious mode of equality. He knew of no such practical Jacobins as his Majesty's ministers. They had banished gold and silver from London, at the time when they began to be plentiful in Paris; and they had taken up the paper system, when France had laid it down. Compulsory loans, military force, and every Jacobin project, they had adopted as soon as France rejected them. He concluded with an eulogy on the immortal jury of 1794, which had defeated the Robespierrian system attempted to be established in this country.

Marquis of
Lansdowne.

Few converts seem to have been made by these declamations, for there appeared against the motion a majority unusually numerous*.

Motion lost.

No better success attended a motion by Alderman Harvey Combe for an address, praying his Majesty to dismiss from his presence and councils his present ministers, as the most likely means of obtaining a speedy and permanent peace. As none of the great leaders appeared on either side, and the debate was confined to London aldermen and country gentlemen, who

Motion by
Alderman
Harvey
Combe.

* 104 to 17.

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CL.

1797.

Alderman
Curtis.

May 30.
Motion by the
Duke of
Bedford.

were not particularly well acquainted with the sentiments of cabinets or the interior guidance of public measures, it would answer little purpose to recite arguments frequently before produced, or recapitulate assertions often advanced and refuted. One little incident in the debate may be preserved. The worshipful mover, apologizing for his own want of ability, said, he acted on the instructions of his constituents, with which he should ever consider himself bound to comply. His worthy colleague and brother alderman, Curtis, observed, that he had deviated from those instructions in the very wording of his motion. The instructions were against the present "weak and wicked" ministers. Now, by omitting the words "weak and wicked," he plainly shewed that he thought his constituents were wrong in so styling them. As to himself, he had candidly told his constituents that he should act according to the dictates of his own conscience, regardless of any instructions*.

One more attempt to expel the ministry from office was made by the Duke of Bedford, who prefaced, with a vehement speech, a long motion for an address, recapitulating all the complaints on the calamitous war: the desertion of allies, the triumphs of an enemy the country had been taught by ministers to despise, the public credit impaired, our coasts with impunity insulted, the exertions of the British navy suspended, and the melancholy situation of Ireland, presented to view a series of calamities unparalleled in our history; and beseeching his Majesty, by dismissing from his presence for ever those ministers whose measures had impaired the liberties, and whose extravagance had injured the property, of his subjects, to afford a sure testimony of his gracious intention of co-operating in restoring the spirit of the British constitution, and of adopting a system of economy and retrenchment, alone consistent with the prosperity of his exhausted people.

In the debate on this verbose motion, the principal effort was to impress the necessity of a reform in Par-

* The division was 242 to 59.

liament. On this point, the supporters of the motion were not quite agreed among themselves; Lord Guilford, in particular, declared that, on its expediency, he had long differed with gentlemen for whose opinions he had a great respect; and, although many of his doubts were removed, and he had not the same terror as some others, he was not a convert to the measure.

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Lord
Guilford.

The Marquis of Lansdowne, after describing the great and rapid successes of Bonaparte, the most formidable enemy this country had to contend with, considered Lord Grenville as the cause of those successes. He had provoked hostilities, and, by his friendly assistance, not only had the French added to their possessions three times the extent of territory acquired by Bonaparte, but had also experienced an increase of three times the number of their population. The noble lord might, therefore, be justly entitled to have a statue erected to him in the Pantheon for achievements in favour of the republic; nor could Bonaparte himself envy such a tribute to the merit which he was bound, both as a friend to his country and an admirer of heroism, to acknowledge.

Marquis of
Lansdowne.

Excited by these remarks, the noble Secretary of State vindicated the strictures which the speech of the Duke of Bedford and some other peers had occasioned. In deploring the calamities of the war, and the distresses produced by it, his Grace had merely stated arguments which would apply with equal force against the prosecution of any war whatever. The hostilities had not only been commenced on the ground of absolute necessity, but had been approved of by a vast majority of the country, and prosecuted with the entire approbation of Parliament. The noble lords opposite considered it as a settled point, that the removal of ministers would be grateful to the public; but would they also affirm that it would be equally so if they themselves were to occupy their places. When he considered the present situation of public affairs, and the consequences likely to result from a servile compliance with the leading

Lord
Grenville

CHAP.
CI.

1797.

doctrines of the day, he should boldly say that ministers would not tamely desert the honourable post which they filled, but continue to direct all their efforts to the preservation of the constitution and the happiness of the people. A reform of Parliament was a measure he had ever opposed as a complete alteration of the constitution. He had even opposed a temperate reform; but that which in these days was recommended, went to pluck up by the roots every right planted by the constitution; to destroy every principle of liberty and property; to disfranchise corporations, to annul chartered rights, to establish districts, or, to characterize them more properly, departments throughout the country; and, as one member could only represent one department, it went to change every election throughout the kingdom into the nature of a Westminster election, with the benefits of which every one of their lordships was fully acquainted. Speculation was sure to open the way to the horrors of revolution; and who could stop the torrent when once it burst forth? These arguments were enforced and amplified by the Lord Chancellor, and the division was strongly against the motion*; but two protests were entered on the Journals, to one of which three, and to the other two, peers affixed their signatures.

26th.
Mr. Grey's
motion for
Parliamentary
reform.

Parliamentary reform was much dwelt on in this debate, probably from a long discussion which had taken place on the subject four days before, when Mr. Grey moved to bring in a bill to amend and regulate the election of members to the House of Commons. The plan he proposed was, that the number of members should remain unaltered in the House; that the county representation, instead of ninety-two, the present number, should be one hundred and thirteen. For instance, instead of two for the county of York, there should be two for each Riding; and so in other counties, where the present representation was not proportionate to the extent of soil and population. In order to put an end to compromises, each county or riding should be formed into grand divisions,

each to return one representative. The right of election should be extended to copyholders and certain leaseholders. The remaining four hundred members were to be returned by householders, in proportions regulated by local circumstances; for instance, great towns, such as the metropolis, should require a greater number of electors to return a representative, than places where the population was more scattered; otherwise the populous towns would obtain a too great local ascendancy. The country should be formed into divisions, so that one person should not vote for more than one member; and, to prevent expense, the poll should be taken throughout the whole kingdom at one time.

It will not be attempted to give the substance of a series of speeches, which occupy ninety-one of the closely printed columns of the Parliamentary History*, and for the length of which little compensation is made either by novelty or force, but merely to exhibit some particularly prominent points.

All who favoured the measure agreed in declaring that the House of Commons did not represent or protect the people; but as to the extent of reform, or the means of effecting it, they were not in such perfect concord.

Arguments.

Speaking of his former unsuccessful attempts, Mr. Grey said, that if he and his friends had incurred imputations of a wish to gratify personal interest and private ambition, and a wanton desire to thwart the executive government, they could not, in the present instance, expect to escape similar, or still more odious, charges. It was some consolation, however, that although their exertions were not well received in that House, the public might pass a different decision upon them; and to the public would the eventual decision belong. In his propositions for a reform in Parliament, he had never proceeded on any speculation of natural and imprescriptible rights. The measures he had suggested were not founded on grounds of right; man, on such grounds, could not claim any particular form of

Mr. Grey.

* Vol. xxxiii. page 644 to 735.

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government. Here, however, he begged not to be misunderstood; there was no man more warmly attached to, or who would more steadily support, the natural and imprescriptible rights of mankind; these were liberty and security; and when liberty and security were not properly guaranteed by any particular system of government, they who lived under it had a right to demand, either that it should be changed or amended. The advocates for universal suffrage were bound to sustain their demand, by showing that it was for the good of the people. Inequality of representation, of itself, he did not consider a sufficient ground of reform. For instance, he never had argued that there should be a change in the representation because Cornwall sent as many representatives to Parliament as all the counties of Scotland together, and because there were some boroughs, with a few houses and a handful of inhabitants, which returned as many members as the opulent and extensive county of York. Although this sounded strange in theory, yet, if it was not shown that in practice it was injurious to the rights of Englishmen, their argument was good, who contended that the nation, under its present system of government, had enjoyed much prosperity, and a large portion of happiness, and who argued against the expediency of a change from the chance of endangering the existence of the system, and of giving birth to evils of a much more serious nature than those which existed.

Mr. Erskine.

Mr. Erskine, who seconded the motion, maintained that if the most arbitrary and rapacious tyrant that ever afflicted mankind by his ambition had invaded and conquered England, he could not have leant so heavily on all the springs of national industry, or so dried up the sources of prosperity for ages to come, as the late Parliament had done. Gengis Khan would, in wisdom, have refrained from raising two hundred millions sterling on this conquered island in the space of four years; he could not have been so besotted as to stir up the conquered to revolt against his authority by arbitrary laws, by public bankruptcy, and a total proscription of that character of freedom

which had for ages belonged to a people ; and, lastly, that the country would have died, to a man, rather than have submitted to what they were now sinking under, amidst that stupefaction and prostration of strength and energy which, in the decline of nations, the baseness of corruption never failed to produce ; power so obtained could not be permanent, for, in some new form, the original rights of mankind would surely be reassumed, and the monuments of tyranny and injustice overthrown.

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CI.

1797.

Sir Francis Burdett considered the revolution in France to have been occasioned entirely by the extravagance, profligacy, and insolence of its administration. The same causes were operating with us ; and even Mr. Fox, were he minister to morrow, could do nothing substantial for the benefit of the people, without an entire change of system in our politics ; nor even then, unless there were a full and free representation of the people : " Perhaps, I may be told," he said, " that monarchy itself cannot be supported " without corruption. If that be so, then I, for one, " am a republican. It is not ministers I wish to op- " pose: it is corruption I wish to destroy. With " respect to universal suffrage, that is a point which " may be discussed hereafter."

Sir Francis
Burdett.

Mr. Fox said he had always deprecated universal suffrage, less on account of the confusion to which it would lead, than because it would embarrass and prevent the deliberative voice of the country from being heard. He did not think that they would augment the deliberative body of the people by counting all the heads ; but that, in truth, it would confer on individuals the power of drawing forth numbers, who, without deliberation, would implicitly act upon their will. Mr. Sheridan knew not why universal suffrage should have been brought into such contempt ; he remembered at some meetings signing his name with the Duke of Richmond in favour of universal suffrage and annual Parliaments, and he was not at all ashamed of having signed it ; there was no secrecy about the matter ; it was published in all the news-

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Sheridan.

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papers: he thought this plan a better one, and that the mass of the people would be satisfied with it.

In the progress of the debate, every subject calculated to irritate individual members, or to inflame the people, was copiously dilated on. The American war, the existing contest, the fatal influence of government in the House, Mr. Pitt's former opinions, expressions of Mr. Burke in his early political writings; all the events of the French revolution, and all the perils which awaited this country if reform were refused or delayed, were drawn out in terrific array. On a division, the motion was rejected*.

May 19.
Mr. Fox's
motion to re-
peal the
Sedition Act.

Mr. Fox had often repeated, in the course of debate, the opinion he expressed in his address to the electors of Westminster to the disadvantage of the last Parliament, and had given notice of his intention to move for a repeal of the two acts against treason and sedition, on which was founded a great portion of his complaint. At length he entered on the subject. With respect to high treason, he observed that the statute of Edward the Third contained all that was necessary for the protection of the King, and that every extension of the law beyond that great and national object had only served to take away the reverence which its simplicity excited. In the reign of Elizabeth and of Charles the Second, severe and scandalous laws were enacted. It was made highly penal to say Charles was a Papist. Why? Because, in truth, he was so. In the present day no such law would be thought necessary; his Majesty's well-known character was the best protection against such an imputation. For political libels, on a second conviction, judges might impose barbarous and inhuman judgments. Fine and imprisonment would sufficiently punish the crime, if crime it were, of publishing the most extravagant political opinion as to the form of governing a community. Had this bill passed a century ago, how many men, whose characters made them dear to mankind, Locke for example, might have been banished

and condemned to the society of a set of beings whom vice had degraded and crimes of every nature had expelled from all rational intercourse with man. He adverted to Wilkes, and spoke of Gerald as a man whose elegant and useful attainments made him dear to the circles of literature and taste; bred to elegant enjoyments, and endowed with talents that rendered him valuable to his country, banishment to such a man was certain death, and, accordingly, he sunk under the sentence, the victim of virtuous, wounded sensibility.

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CI.

1797.

The act for preventing seditious meetings and assemblies affected rights which, in their very nature and essence, must have been antecedent to the power of legislation itself; and it was not merely a question of morality, but of the highest political prudence, whether rights which were principles, rights which made the foundation of the legislature itself, and without which no legislation could be legitimate, ought to be subjected to the provisions of a statute. The sheriffs were enabled to prevent meetings; and, during its existence, more refusals had been given by magistrates than in any former period. The power of dispersing meetings was no less obnoxious; and, on both points, he produced instances from Suffolk, Surry, and Westminster. The right of assembling to petition, supposed to be preserved by the statute, was a mere mockery; people might meet to eulogize and flatter the government; but if they intended to remonstrate or censure, the magistrate would interpose and disperse them. Wisdom would dictate that the people of England should be conciliated, not outraged; and modern instances had strikingly illustrated the truth, that the liberty of the lower classes could not be touched without making the higher orders pay a severe retribution. You shall not take away one privilege, you shall not diminish one right, without suffering ten fold, fifty fold, an hundred fold. His motion was directed to the repeal of the sedition act only.

Serjeant Adair corrected some mistakes of the mover, in points of law, vindicated the statutes, both

Serjeant
Adair.

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in their enactments and their effects. Some discontent had been excited when they were first proposed, but it had subsided, because men had read the bills, and found that no constitutional, no proper meeting for the discussion of any real or imaginary grievance was prohibited; as all meetings called by sheriffs, mayors, or other magistrates, were excepted. The statutes had not, as the experience of the last few weeks plainly shewed, suppressed the legitimate right of petitioning, although they had put an end to those daring meetings which previously had been so frequent.

Motion
rejected.

Several members spoke in approbation of the bills, but not one against them; and it was remarkable that no member of administration, nor any of the usual supporters of Mr. Fox, offered any observation. He made a vigorous and eloquent reply, and an ample majority appeared against him*.

Motions on
peace.

Motions on the subject of peace were made in both houses, after the recess, in which the principal arguments arose on the disposition of the French government, as displayed during the late mission of Lord Malmesbury. The Earl of Oxford, after analyzing the papers presented to the House, came to a conclusion, that the Directory was disposed to peace, but determined to keep the Rhine for their boundary, which, as we had not the power to prevent, we must either make peace on those terms, or persist in the war, which was certain ruin. On these grounds, he moved a long address to the King, desiring him to enter into an immediate negotiation upon such terms as France was likely to listen and accede to, and in such manner, and through the medium of such men, as should leave no room to doubt his pacific intentions.

In support of this "extraordinary string of propositions," as it was termed by Lord Grenville, the dukes of Norfolk and Bedford and the Earl of Guilford made some observations; Lord Grenville, Earl Spencer, and other peers, referred the House to its

own resolution of the thirtieth of December*, enquiring whether, without renouncing all regard to consistency and dignity in their proceedings, they could agree to the proposed address. The assertion that haughtiness of demeanour and insincerity of declaration had marked the English and not the French negotiator, was fully, though almost unnecessarily, disproved. The motion was negatived†, and the debate was in itself little entitled to notice, but for an unusual incident which ensued. The Earl of Oxford, intending to enter a protest, found, on application at the clerk's office, that his address had not been entered on the journals, and was informed that Lord Kenyon, who sat for the Lord Chancellor, had carried it away. He therefore published in a newspaper the protest he intended for the House, pledging himself to demand, in his place, the fullest reparation for the insult offered, through one, to the whole House, in this illegal and unprecedented manner.

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The Earl's
motion
carried away.

His
publication.

He redeemed his pledge, by moving that a Chancellor taking away the motion of any noble lord, so that it could not be entered on the journals, was guilty of a high breach of privilege; and that Lord Kenyon, acting as pro-chancellor, having done so, should be censured.

30th.
His motion.

In answer to this attack, the Bishop of Rochester read a standing order, declaring "that any peer, in printing or publishing the proceedings of that house, or any part thereof, without the authority of the same, should be deemed guilty of a high breach of privilege." He was astonished that a noble lord, in the second year of his sitting as a peer, should undertake to teach the House its duty. When he learnt, from rumour, of a motion on a breach of privilege, he conceived it to have been that committed most audaciously in a miserable newspaper, giving a pretended account of their proceedings, under the head of an "Address to the Nation‡." In it, Lord Grenville's reply to the motion of the noble Earl, whose title of

Bishop of
Rochester.

* Page 523 † 52 to 16.

‡ A copy will be found in the Parliamentary History, vol. xxxiii. p. 202.

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CI.

1797.

"Oxford and Mortimer" was subscribed to the protest, as it was called, subjoined to the introduction, was said to consist of arguments "poor, weak, and rude," and such as were never heard of before. When so audacious a misrepresentation appeared, he had expected that the noble lord whose name was affixed would have vindicated his own honour and dignity, and the honour and dignity of the house, by complaining against the printer, who published so aggravated and audacious a libel, for a high breach of privilege. The arguments contained in the flimsy production called a protest, were not worth an answer.

Rejected.

On a division, the noble Earl stood alone against fifty members; and it was resolved that no entry of the proceedings should be made on the journals.

April 10.
Motion by Mr.
Pollen.

Mr. Pollen moved for an address declaring that, on a mature consideration of the circumstances, and result of the negotiation, it appeared that his Majesty's benign intentions of restoring general peace had been misconceived by the government of France, or ill explained to the people; and therefore praying for immediate measures to remove every misconception as to the sincerity of government.

Debate.

In the debate, the French account was contrasted with that given by our ministers; and all the circumstances of the war, the state of possession, the probability of retaining conquests, and the expediency of resigning them, were amply discussed. Mr. Pitt declared that, in consequence of reasons expressed by the Emperor, his Majesty had determined to send a confidential person to Vienna, with instructions to conduct farther negotiations in concert with his allies. Colonel Porter expressed distrust of the sincerity of ministers, and characterized the present attempt as a mere bugbear to delude the people. After able speeches by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. Hiley Addington, who moved the order of the day, Colonel Fullarton, and other members, the motion of Mr. Hiley Addington was adopted*.

Not with a view to general peace, but in censure

* 291 to 85.

of a particular point in the conduct of the war, Mr. St. John moved an address to withdraw our troops from St. Domingo, urging the want of them for domestic defence, the impolicy of an attempt to conquer that extended island, the jealousy of other maritime powers, the disposition of the negroes to insurrection and revolt, the vast and increasing expense of the expedition, and the immense destruction of life by disease. To these arguments, Mr. Dundas gave answers derived from official communications: he argued the great value of the colony, which produced more than all our West India islands, Jamaica included, and its importance to the commerce and navigation of France. The expenses had been regulated on a strict system of economy; and the part of the island in our possession produced in the last year a million and a half sterling, and employed above four hundred ships. Mr. Bryan Edwards, whose local knowledge and industrious research entitled his opinions to great attention, supported many of the facts advanced by Mr. Dundas; and while he deprecated an attempt to conquer the whole island, recommended a retention of some posts. Cape Nicola and Tiburon would give us the command of the windward passage; and these he thought might be kept, although he was persuaded that all Europe could not prevent St. Domingo from becoming a negro colony. Mr. Fox and Dr. Laurence delivered, on opposite sides, very able arguments, and the motion was negatived*.

Slavery and the slave trade occupied, as usual, a share in the deliberations of the session. In a long, able, and well-combined speech, Mr. Charles Ellis adverted to the situation of slaves in our colonies, shewing the insufficiency of an act for abolishing the trade, in procuring comfort and happiness to those already in that condition, and pointing out the encouragement of lawful marriage, the improvement of domestic ties, and religious and moral instruction, as the best means of securing a population which, by its health, increase, and intelligence, should render further

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CI.

1797.
May 18.
Debate on St.
Domingo.

Mr. Dundas.

Mr. Bryan
Edwards.

April 6.
On the slave
trade.
Mr. Charles
Ellis.

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CI.

1797.

importation from Africa useless, and even disadvantageous to the undertakers; and he moved an address, praying his Majesty to give directions to the governors in the West Indies to recommend to the respective councils and assemblies the adoption of measures calculated to obviate the causes which had hitherto impeded the natural increase of the negroes already in the islands, gradually to diminish the necessity of the slave trade, and ultimately to lead to its complete termination.

Mr. Wilberforce and other members.

Much eloquence was displayed in the debate. Mr. Wilberforce opposed the motion, and decried the idea of meliorating the condition of the negroes in the colonies while importations from Africa were continued. Mr. Pitt, Mr. William Smith, Mr. Fox, and some others, gave their opinions on this side; they were opposed by Mr. Bryan Edwards, Lord Hawkesbury, and Sir William Young: the question was carried on a division*.

May 15.
Mr. Wilberforce's motion.

Mr. Wilberforce made a new effort, by moving to bring in a bill for abolishing the trade at a time to be limited, and moved that the House should forthwith resolve itself into a committee to consider the subject. The usual advocates appeared on both sides; but the debate was neither new nor interesting, and the motion was negatived by a small majority†.

June 11, 13,
16.
Mr. Bryan Edwards's bill.

One horrible grievance with respect to slaves was pointed out by Mr. Bryan Edwards. By a statute of the last reign‡, made for the security of British creditors, it was declared that slaves might be seized on, extended and sold, for the satisfaction of all debts, in the same manner as personal property. In animated terms, he depicted the situation of a well-disposed negro under this merciless, diabolical system. After having suffered the horrors of captivity, and the miseries of the middle passage, under the protection of a mild and merciful master he begins to forget his sorrows, and even to rejoice that he has been removed to a land of security, civilization, and Christianity. He

* 99 to 63.

† 82 to 74.

‡ 5 Geo. II. c. 7.

has obtained a comfortable establishment, built himself a house, is happy in a wife, and sees a young family rising around him. His provision ground, the creation of his own industry and the staff of his existence, affords him not only support, but the means of adding something to the mere necessities of life. But now a hurricane destroys in a moment all the master's prospects of his affluence, the wretched negro is seized on by the sheriff's officer, forcibly separated from his wife and children, dragged to public auction, purchased by a stranger, and, although free from any charge of crime, sent, loaded with chains, perhaps to terminate his miserable existence in the mines of Mexico, excluded for ever from the light of heaven. These observations were amplified and illustrated by many arguments and instances; and, without opposition, the bill was brought in and passed.

A bill, enabling his Majesty to convoke Parliament on fourteen days' notice, occasioned some slight and unimportant debate; and other business having been concluded, the session was terminated by a speech from the throne, approving the general proceedings, and announcing that, since the accession of the present Emperor of Russia, the commercial engagements between the two countries had been advantageously renewed.

CHAP.
CI.

1797.
July 17.

Termination
of the session.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWO.

1797.

The French invade the Papal territories.—Bonaparte's proclamation.—Progress of the French.—Terms of peace imposed on the Pope.—Disappointment of Bonaparte.—Proceedings in Italy.—Proceedings of the Archduke Charles.—Representation to the Germanic body—their conduct.—The Archduke appointed Generalissimo.—Plans of Bonaparte—his progress.—Battle of Tagliamento.—Proclamation to the people of the Tyrol.—Advance of the French.—Terror in Vienna.—The peril avoided.—Inaction of the armies of the Rhine.—Proclamation against England.—Bonaparte's letter to the Archduke.—The answer.—Suspension of arms at Judenburg.—Inaction on the Rhine.—Hoche crosses at Neuwied.—Progress of Moreau.—Efforts against Venice.—Treaty of Leoben.—Destruction of the Venetian Government.—Revolution in Genoa.—Cisalpine Republic.—Negotiation with the Emperor.—Treaty of Montebello.—Feelings in Germany.—State of France.—Progress of Royalism.—Troops approach Paris.—Conduct of Bonaparte.—Of Hoche.—Feebleness of the Royalist party.—Revolution of the Dix-huit Fructidor.

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CII.

1797.
The French
invade the
Papal terri-
tories.
Feb. 6th.

AFTER the surrender of Mantua, Bonaparte proceeded, without delay, in his meditated operations against the Papal territories. He announced his intentions in a proclamation, at once bombastic, hypocritical, and threatening. "The French soldier," it said, "bears in one hand the bayonet, the sure pledge of victory, and offers with the other to towns and

“villages, peace, protection, and safety.” Every village or town in which, at the approach of his army, the tocsin should be sounded, was to be instantly burned, and its municipal officers shot. Against every commune, in which any Frenchman should be killed, a moveable column would be sent, and hostages taken; an extraordinary contribution would also be levied. Priests and ministers of religion, by whatever names distinguished, were to be protected in their existing position, if they conducted themselves according to the principles of the gospel; otherwise they were to be subjected to military law, and treated with more severity than other men*.

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1797.

Without difficulty, the French made themselves masters of Forli and Casenna in Romagna, took possession of the far-famed chapel of our Lady of Loretto, and of Ancona, the only port on the Adriatic, except Venice; a station indispensable to their communication with Constantinople. The time was not yet come when the total prostration of the papal power was desirable; but, in dictating the terms on which he would grant peace, Bonaparte, with the sanction of his government, displayed equal haughtiness and rapacity. The Pope, against whose conduct no intelligible complaint was preferred, was sentenced to cede the duchies of Bologna and Ferrara, and the legation of Romagna; to pay fifteen millions of livres (£622,000), beside the sixteen millions remaining due of the twenty-one stipulated in the armistice; the French were to retain the citadel of Ancona until a continental peace, and the provinces of Macerata, Umbria, Perugia, and Camerino, till the whole thirty-six millions should be liquidated. As a matter of humiliating form, rather than of useful substance, all title to their original spoliation of Avignon, Le Comtat, and the Venaissin, was surrendered. Thus was the Pope, who had never declared war against the French, and who had only taken up arms for the purpose of self-defence, obliged to purchase the preservation of the throne of Saint

Progress of the
French.

Terms of peace
imposed on the
Pope.

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. p. 295.

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CII.

1797.

Disappoint-
ment of
Bonaparte.

Peter at the expense of nearly one third of the dominions of the church, and a sum exceeding the amount of his revenues for a year.

This arrangement was accelerated by intelligence which Bonaparte received that the Archduke Charles was arrived at Trieste to take the command, and that Austrian reinforcements were marching in all directions; while, of thirty thousand men which he had required, only seventeen thousand were sent; a disappointment which obliged him to alter his plan of campaign*.

Proceedings in
Italy.
19th.

When this pacification had been concluded, Bonaparte withdrew the great body of his forces from the territories of the Pope, sending them in carriages, or by forced marches, back upon the Po, to co-operate in the invasion of the Austrian dominions. Five thousand, who were left in Romagna, with generals Victor and Rusca, carried on a war, under the semblance of peace; a war, not of military exploit, but of political seduction; sowing the seeds of discontent, inciting the people to resist and reject their governments, and aiding, both by counsel and force, those who displayed that inclination. In the march of Ancona, the duchy of Urbino, Romagna and the circumjacent countries, insurrections were excited against the Pope: some occasioned by the rapacity and irregularity of the invaders also took place; but the results were widely different. His holiness wanted power, if he had the inclination, to punish; while the republicans, true in that respect to the proclamation of their general, visited with the severest scourges of hostility those who manifested the desire or were supposed to possess the means of effective hostility, giving up to plunder the towns of Macerata, Jesi, Ricanata, Porto di Fermo, and Grotto di Mare, and shooting great numbers of their inhabitants. In defiance of public right and decency, they again took possession of Leghorn; and, under pretence of fearing insurrections, stationed troops in Genoa, the territory of Modena, and Lombardy.

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. page 308.

Encouraged by loyal assurances from all parts of Germany, and particularly the hereditary states, the Emperor, notwithstanding the destruction of the fifth army raised for the defence of Italy, did not shrink from a renewed contest. The Archduke Charles, called at too late a period from the banks of the Rhine, repaired to Inspruck, where he learned from the imperial commissary, General de Lehrback, that discouragement and discontent at the conduct of their leaders had produced disorder and the dissolution of the Austrian army, and was advised to cashier several general officers, and, with the aid of General Mack, to re-organize regiments and form fresh divisions of the army. The commencement of a new campaign was officially announced to the Germanic body, with a declaration that those states which claimed protection from the arms of the Emperor, could not withdraw themselves from the obligation of bringing forward their complete contingents, and paying up, in ready money, their arrears of the constitutional contribution called Roman months. The example and influence of Prussia, and the secularization of several ecclesiastical states, deprived this appeal of a considerable portion of its due effect. The Archduke could act only under the authority of the Aulic Council ; and, in that body, a party eager for peace, under every possible degradation, had great and almost paramount influence.

When the Archduke arrived in Vienna, his appearance was hailed with enthusiasm ; for the people duly appreciated his high qualities : the Emperor, sensible of his own interests, nominated him generalissimo of all the armies of Austria, in Italy and in Germany ; but this appointment, however honourable, was of little avail, since the power to render it useless remained in the hands of an intriguing faction, disposed to sacrifice the honour and true interests of their country.

It was known in the imperial council that Bonaparte was making arrangements to open a way to Vienna ; but the means of defence which they adopted appeared calculated rather to facilitate than obstruct his success, as they placed the Archduke's army in the

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1797.

Proceedings
of the Arch-
duke Charles.

6th.

Representa-
tion to the
Germanic
body.
14th.

Their conduct.

20th.

The Archduke
appointed
generalissimo.

Plans of
Bonaparte.

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1797.

Friuli, instead of the Tyrol. Bonaparte's apparent intention was to penetrate to Vienna through the Julian and Noric Alps, a way never trod since the days of Charlemagne; but his real end was, by terrifying the Emperor, even in his own capital, and, by the allurements of terms apparently liberal and advantageous, to effect a treaty of peace which would satisfy the ambition of the Republic. Without ample reinforcements, which he had no reason to expect, the Archduke could not resist an army exceeding his in numbers, animated by victory, and confident in the genius and fortune of their leader. The French army was augmented by ten thousand Piedmontese and twenty pieces of cannon; the King of Sardinia being converted from an enemy into an ally.

March 10.
His progress.

In his first military movements, Bonaparte evinced his usual judgment and promptitude. Almost unresisted, he passed the Piave, and, after some combats of less importance at Sangara and Sacile, encountered the Archduke at Tagliamento. Instead of his own army of the Rhine, the Austrian Prince commanded a force, in number, discipline, and quality, widely different from these; who, having partaken in his perils and his glory, would feel themselves stimulated by the sight of his person and the sound of his name. In the fight, a body of cavalry fled, and, forcing their general by their pressure to accompany them, afforded to Bonaparte an opportunity of insult, which he never omitted, by declaring, in his dispatch to the Directory, that, in the complete route, the Prince had only time to run away*.

14th.
Battle of
Tagliamento.

Rapid progress
of the French.

After this victory, several actions followed, led chiefly by Massena, in which the French were always successful; Carinthia, Styria, and the Friuli, were open to them; and at several places, Trieste in particular, they were gratified with the spoil and plunder of English merchandizes, as well as the minerals and other productions of the country. The Save, the Drave, and the Julian Alps, were passed; the important post

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. page 315.

of Palma-nuova, belonging to Venice, was taken, almost without resistance; and, within seventeen days from the opening of the campaign, the French had penetrated into the hereditary states, and were in a position to menace Vienna itself.

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1797.

To conciliate the people of the Tyrol, and veil the real intention of the invaders, Bonaparte directed his officers to confirm, by proclamation, all existing laws and magistrates; to assure the continuance of the public exercise of religious worship; abundantly to cajole the priests and endeavour to make a party among the monks; to speak well of the Emperor, but with unsparing abuse of his ministers and all his advisers. When masters of Brixen and some adjacent countries, they were to establish a commission of government, which should levy all the imposts usually rendered to the Emperor, but which were to be paid into the military chest. To these and some other measures, they were to add a rigorous disarming of the people; to take hostages where they thought proper; and to lay impositions, in form of contributions, on all villages which should behave ill, or in which French soldiers should be killed. The brave people of the hereditary states were neither deluded nor intimidated by this artifice; firm in their loyalty, and animated by the true spirit of patriotism, they opposed the invader by such means as they possessed; they had no regular army to meet him in the field, but they harassed his detachments, cut off his foraging parties, and intercepted his supplies; but these were movements rather exhibiting the spirit of the people, than affecting the general state of the war. The French divisions under Joubert and Bernadotte pursued their conquests on every side, until the head quarters of the Republicans reached Judenburg, and their advanced posts were pushed as far as Simmering. The Archduke's remaining hopes of reinforcements were destroyed, and Bonaparte, being within three days' march, hoped to gratify his darling ambition of dictating terms of peace in the Austrian capital. Disorder and terror prevailed in Vienna; positions deemed impregnable were taken; passes,

15th.
Proclamation
to the people
of the Tyrol.

Advance of
the French.

Terror in
Vienna.

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CII.

1797.

The peril
avoided.Inaction of the
armies on the
Rhine.April 1st.
Proclamation
against
England.

which it had been considered impossible to force, were cleared, and no obstruction to the advance of the French appeared. Part of the Imperial family left Vienna; the archives and most valuable effects were removed into Hungary; the principal families adopted similar measures of security; and the people, anxiously crowding to the bank to obtain cash for their paper, soon occasioned a stoppage of payment.

The apprehended evil was averted, not by military resistance, but by the multifarious intrigues in which the French were engaged, the uncertainty of their government, and their jealousy of the great general, who was at once the founder of their successes and the cause of their fears. Their attempts on the republic of Venice had involved them in difficulties, and many other plots which they had set in motion distracted their attention and prevented the direction of their efforts to any single end. At the commencement of the campaign, a promise was made by the Directory, that, when Bonaparte should have passed the Isonzo, the armies of the Rhine and Sambre and Meuse, consisting of more than two hundred and fifty thousand men, should penetrate into Germany; but, long after Napoléon had passed Isonzo, they still remained in their winter quarters. When he achieved his great and rapid successes, he wrote to the Directory, expressing his hopes that these armies were on their march; but, after much delay, he received, at Clagenfurth, an answer, congratulating him on his progress, but informing him that the two armies would not pass the Rhine, and that a diversion by them, in Germany, must not be reckoned upon, because the calamities of the last campaign had deprived them of their boats and other requisite equipments*.

In preparation for the progress he hoped to make, Bonaparte had addressed to the people of Carinthia one of his usual deceptive proclamations. The French army did not seek conquest, or change in the religion, the manners, or the customs of the people; they were

* Las Cases's Journal, part iv. p. 63.

the friends of all nations, but particularly of the brave people of Germany. The attempts at peace had been frustrated through the Emperor's ministers, who, corrupted by the gold of England, betrayed their country and their sovereign, having no will but that of the perfidious islanders, who were the horror of all Europe. "Inhabitants of Carinthia," he added, "I know that you detest as much as we do the English, who are the only gainers by the war, and your ministers, who are sold to them*."

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The hopes he entertained from his advantageous position and from these cajoleries were destroyed by the dispatch from his government: he saw that the accomplishment of his original project of marching to Vienna was impracticable, and that he could not, consistently with the rules of prudence, think of passing the Summering. With admirable tact, and never-failing dissimulation, he addressed, in two hours after the receipt of the dispatch, a letter to the Archduke Charles, in which he affected the mildest sentiments of benevolence, humanity, and moderation. "Brave soldiers," he said, "although they make war, are desirous of peace. Has not the present contest lasted six years? Have we not killed men enough, and sufficiently afflicted humanity? Her voice calls loudly upon us. Europe, after taking up arms against the French Republic, has laid them down; your nation stands alone, yet blood is about to flow more profusely than ever. This sixth campaign opens under sinister omens; whatever may be its issue, we shall kill, on both sides, some thousands of men more; and, after all, we must necessarily come to an agreement, since all things have an end, not excepting vindictive passions." After some more observations on the miseries which must flow from a protracted war, he added, "For my part, sir, should the overture I have now made, prove the means of saving the life of one individual, I should be prouder of the civic crown, which I should think I had

Bonaparte's
letter to the
Archduke.

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. p. 330.

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The answer.

7th.

Suspension of
arms at
Judenberg.Inaction on
the Rhine.Hoche crosses
at Neuwied.
18th.

19th.

Progress of
Moreau.
19th.Efforts against
Venice.

“thereby merited, than all the mournful glory which results from military successes.” In answer, the Archduke expressed a desire for the return of peace, without presuming to scrutinize the causes of the war ; but, as he was not authorized to enter into any negotiation, he must await further orders. Arrangements were speedily made, which produced a suspension of arms, which was concluded at Judenberg, and was introductory to a preliminary treaty.

During the rigour of the winter, the opposing armies stationed on each bank of the Rhine had maintained a truce, as if by convention. The Austrian force, diminished by detachments sent into Italy, amounted to one hundred thousand men, including garrisons, the troops of the circles, and the army of Condé ; the portion on the Upper Rhine was led by General Latour, to whom Moreau was opposed ; as was Hoche to General Werneck, who commanded on the Lower. The united force of the French was one hundred and forty thousand well-disciplined and experienced men. Hoche crossed the river at Neuwied, and, although apprized, by a flag of truce from General Kray, of the armistice at Judenberg, pressed forward, fought several battles with constant advantage, and had reached Frankfort, when his further progress was stopped by intelligence from Bonaparte that preliminaries of peace were signed.

Under much greater difficulties and disadvantages, Moreau also crossed the river near Strasburg, and, although strenuously resisted, pursued a victorious career, investing the fortress of Ehrenbritstein, capturing that of Kehl, which had cost the imperialists so much labour and time, without firing a shot, and taking also Stollhsfer, Freydenstadt, Haslech, and Ettenheim, when his career was stopped, like that of Hoche, by intelligence from Bonaparte.

While Napoléon was pressing forward toward Vienna, and entering into negotiations with the Emperor, his mind was agitated, and his attention much engaged, by the plans through which, by a combination of treachery and violence, he contemplated the

acquisition of Venice, and the establishment of revolutionary governments in other states, which should render them utterly subservient to France. Whatever might be the speculative defects in the government of Venice, the people, long accustomed to its forms, lived under it contented. French emissaries endeavoured, without immediate success, to imbue their minds with notions of liberty and equality, with hatred for their rulers and contempt for their clergy. It was the earnest wish of all portions of the Venetian government to maintain a strict and honourable neutrality; to this effect they answered all propositions made by the French; but even the right of fulfilling their ancient treaties was resented in the punishment inflicted on Verona, and the transactions relating to Peschiera. When the French had by perseverance created in some places a display of a disposition to resist the authorities of the state, and the senate, acting in conformity with the wishes and feelings of the great majority of the people, had begun to take measures of defence, Bonaparte treated their endeavours as criminal. The Venetians, he said, are arming all their peasantry, sending their priests all over the country, and furiously putting in motion all the resources of their worn-out government, to crush Bergamo and Brescia*. In fact, without any exertion on the part of their rulers, and against their inclinations, many thousands of the people had risen in arms, and, being joined by a strong body of Sclavonians, paraded the streets, vociferating their patriotic cry, and denouncing death to the French. The treaty of Leoben was not yet concluded; but relying on the progress that had been made, Bonaparte acted toward the senate with an unchecked confidence. He sent his aid-de-camp, Junot, with a lofty epistle to the Doge, accusing him of having armed the peasantry; to deny it would be vain; and did he believe that the French general, when in the heart of Germany, could be without the power to command respect for the first people in the universe?

April 8th.

* Dispatch to the Directory, Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. p. 339.

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"Peace or war?" he proceeded; "if you do not immediately take means to disperse these assemblies, and arrest and deliver into my hands the authors of the murders which have been committed, war is declared." This most imperious letter, Junot, as he was directed, read in the full senate. In vain did providers of Brescia, Bergamo, and Crema, present documents, proving that the French had themselves created the insurrections of which they complained; these were treated by Bonaparte as a series of impostures, invented to justify, in the eyes of Europe, the perfidy of the Venetian senate. He summed up in seven vague or unfounded articles, his grounds of accusation, and required, within twelve hours, a categorical answer, whether peace or war was to prevail, and, in addition to his former tyrannical claim to sit as judge on the conduct of men of whom he himself was the accuser, he assumed the prerogative of dispensing mercy in a foreign state, by demanding the liberation of all who had been arrested for opinions, and whose only crime was that of shewing attachment for France. More effectually to divide the people, he issued, at the same time, a proclamation to the inhabitants of the Terra Firma, representing that their government, indifferent to their evils, and anxious only for the Lagunes, had left them without protection; he meant, while he inflicted punishment on the guilty, to make a distinction in their favour. In his delusive terms, he promised protection to their religion, persons, and property, and deliverance from the oppression of a small number of men, who, from the days of barbarism, had exercised the government. "As for the madmen," he said, "who, acting under perfidious counsels, will take the other part, and draw down upon their cities the evils of war, I shall punish them in a manner to afford example to others, while it makes them repent their folly*."

Such denunciations, uttered by one who possessed power, in the use of which he was never sparing

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. pp. 341, 343.

against people incapable of military resistance, alarmed the senate; they resorted to what they considered the only means of averting the threatened calamity, by sending an agent to Paris, empowered to purchase the forbearance of the directors by a large bribe: the offer was accepted; but the effect was frustrated by the arrest of the messenger, whose mission had been discovered*.

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1797.

To humble and degrade the ancient government of Venice was not the only, nor even the chief, intent of these violent measures. In consequence of the armistice between the French and Austrian armies, a negotiation for a preliminary treaty was carried on at Leoben. In this transaction, Bonaparte, without any regular authority, acted as the minister of the French government; but his situation rendered him fearless of any objections from the other side; while his firmness, vigour, and sagacity, placed his conduct beyond the reach of censure from his own government. The Austrian plenipotentiaries, he says, in his own account of the transaction, as an agreeable concession, inserted as their first article, that the Emperor acknowledged the French republic; "Strike that out," he exclaimed, "the republic is like the sun, which shines by its own light: none but the blind can fail to see it." In fact, he observed, this acknowledgment would have done mischief, because, if the French people had afterwards wished to create a monarchy, the Emperor might have said that he had acknowledged the republic†.

Treaty of
Leoben.

April 17.

Pressed by perils which were accumulating around him, while no aid appeared from the armies on the Rhine, and stimulated, perhaps, by the desire of displaying himself in an independent act, Bonaparte speedily concluded a treaty, of which the principal articles were—first, the cession of Flanders to the Republic, and the extension of its frontier to the Rhine, on condition of a suitable indemnity being provided to the Emperor in some other quarter: second, the cession of Savoy to the same power, and the ex-

18th.

* *Homme d'Etat*, tome iv. page 320.

† *Montholon*, vol. iv. page 101.

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tension of its territory to the summit of the Piedmontese Alps: third, the establishment of the Cisalpine Republic, including Lombardy, with the states of Modena, Cremona, and the Bergamasque: fourth, the Oglio was fixed on as the boundary of the Austrian possessions in Italy: fifth, the Emperor was to receive, in return for so many sacrifices, the whole continental states of Venice, including Illyria, Istria, Friuli, and the Upper Italy as far as the Oglio: sixth, Venice was to obtain, in return for the loss of its continental possessions, Romagna, Ferrara, and Bologna, which the French had wrested from the Pope: seventh, the important fortresses of Mantua, Peschiera, Porto-Legnano, and Palma-Nuova, were to be restored to the Emperor on the conclusion of a general peace, with the city and castles of Verona. The disgrace of this compact, by which a state, against which war had not been declared by either party, was thus despoiled, belongs not exclusively to the French or the Austrians; their shares are equal.

Quarre is
sought with
Venice.

In prosecution of this nefarious compact, disturbances were created to furnish grounds of complaint; one, most strongly urged, although without any pretence of justice, arose out of the destruction of a French vessel, called *Le Libérateur de l'Italie*, commanded by Captain Laugier. Contrary to all laws, and without a show of right, this vessel had attempted to force its way through the Lagunes, and, persisting in spite of remonstrance, was fired on and sunk, Laugier himself being killed in the action. Aware of the possible flexibility of the Directory, Bonaparte acted no longer as the servant of the Republic, but as an independent sovereign, by recalling the ambassador and declaring war. The Venetian government wrote to explain the event, and to exculpate themselves. His answer to the messenger was characteristic of the coarseness which results from the possession of power, without the mitigating grace derived from humanity and good breeding. "I have read, not without indignation, your letter relative to the murder of Laugier. You have aggravated the atrocity of this

“ transaction, unprecedented in the annals of modern
 “ nations, by the web of lies which your government
 “ has woven as a pretended justification. I cannot
 “ receive you ; you and your senate are dripping with
 “ French blood. When you have placed in my hands
 “ the admiral who gave the order to fire, the com-
 “ mandant of the fort, and the inquisitors who govern
 “ the police of Venice, I will listen to your justifica-
 “ tion.”

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From Palma-Nuova Bonaparte published a declaration of war against the Republic ; took unresisted possession of all their states on Terra Firma, suffering his soldiers to live at discretion, and his officers to plunder without shame or decency. Terrified, and incapable of a magnanimous, though hopeless, exertion, the governors convoked a senate extraordinary, which voted, by a majority of seven hundred and forty to five, that the existing government was burthensome to the people, unsuited to times and circumstances, and therefore deprived themselves of their functions and authorities, and invited the French to Venice for the maintenance of order. The senate was replaced by a democratic municipality of sixty, who issued proclamations in the name of liberty and equality, declaring the sacred duty of insurrection, and the sovereignty of the people. The populace, attached to their ancient government, furiously tore down the proclamations, abused the new-fangled municipality, and reared the ancient flag of their country in the middle of the great square, shouting their accustomed rallying word, “ Viva San Marco ! ” and compelling all people to join in the cry. Being aided by a great number of Slavonians, they seized the arsenals, equipped sloops with cannon, and made preparations for defence. The men of property, more alarmed than ever at a resistance which threatened the destruction of the city, urged the arrival of the French, who were received without opposition ; for the people, destitute of leaders or advisers, seeing the cause they were desirous to maintain abandoned even by those for whose sake it was to be supported, relapsed into torpor, and

Destruction of
 the Venetian
 government.

16th.

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desisted from exertion. Vengeance soon began to be exercised; and several nobles, a bishop, and some priests, were arrested on futile pretences, and shot under the walls of Verona. All property, private as well as public, was seized by the generals, officers, and privates of the French army, and their attendants invested with the names of fiscal commissaries, savans, and philosophers; and this the republican general, in bitter mockery, called the regeneration of Venice. Beside the plunder with which individuals were enriched, he claimed from his unresisting victims the Terra Firma and the port of Venice, until a definitive arrangement; the fleet and arsenal; a contribution of eighty millions (£3,400,000); maintenance for his troops till their retreat; the value of three millions (£125,000) in naval supplies; six ships of the line, completely equipped; forty paintings, at the choice of his commissioners; the most precious manuscripts in the library of St. Mark; and the four famous horses and two lions brought from Constantinople*.

Revolution in
Genoa.

After the establishment of other independent republics in Italy, and the fall of the aristocracy of Venice, a change in Genoa was naturally to be foreseen†. The first movement proceeded from a body calling themselves the Morandi Club, who were aided and excited by agents from Paris: they required the abolition of aristocracy, and the establishment of liberty. The Doge was not disinclined to comply; but the officers of state, the clergy, and the lower class, resisted the change. Ten thousand of them obtained arms, and proclaimed violent hostility against the Jacobins and the French, whom they maltreated, imprisoned, and plundered. Apprized of this proceeding, Bonaparte sent his mandate, by his aid-de-camp, Lavalette, for delivering up all the French who had been arrested, disarming the colliers and porters, and arresting the

May 23.

* In relating these transactions, beside the Histories by Thiers and Lacretelle, the Annual Register, and other periodical publications, I have had reference to Hinckley's Account of the Fall of the Republic of Venice, *Mémoires d'un Homme d'État*, tome iv. p. 218 et seqq.; and for Bonaparte's own account of them, to Las Cases, pt. iv. p. 27, and Montholon, vol. v. p. 410.

† *Œuvres de Napoléon*, tome i. p. 394.

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1797.

June 6.

13.

inquisitors; making the patricians responsible for the lives, and all the magazines and effects of the republic for the property, of the French in custody. The terrified senate signed a convention, establishing, under the authority and with the approbation of Bonaparte, a provisional government. The populace, who had manifested so strong a devotion to the old system, seemed suddenly to be infected with a delirium of joy. A national guard was enrolled; the statues of Doria were dashed in pieces, and the golden book, the record of their government, was publicly burnt, and, after some intrigues and unimportant commotions, Genoa received a new form of political existence, and was denominated the Ligurian Republic. Such was the reward which France bestowed on a government always devoted to her interest. The ports of Genoa had always been open to the French cruisers; she had protected the supply of provisions during her distress; in her pretended neutrality, she had been devoted to the interest of France, and sustained it with secret aids; without remonstrance, she saw her territory occupied by French troops; at the first requisition, she had excluded the English from her ports, dismissed the imperial ambassador, paid a subsidy of four millions, and furnished supplies of every kind. Such a state might have hoped to be spared from the revolutionary tempest; but an aristocratic senate could not, by any submissions and sacrifices, retard for an instant the destiny prepared for her*.

Another republic was yet to be formed, by the fusion of that which had previously received the name of Cispadane, and one of more recent origin, called the Transpadane. These states were situate, as their names denote, on the opposite sides of the river Po: each had its separate government; and the force of long-established opinion rendered them adverse to an

Cisalpine
Republic.

* This last paragraph is taken from the *Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat*, tome iv. p. 355, where, and in those immediately following, will be found a clear and well-combined narrative of the whole transaction. In the previous outline, I have principally followed Bonaparte's own account; Montholon, tome iv. p. 146; and his letters and dispatches, *Œuvres de Napoléon*, tome i. pp. 394, 396, and 413 to 419.

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June 30th.

Negotiation
with the
Emperor.

union; but Bonaparte considering it necessary to the views of France, his emissaries flattered the people with a notion that it was intended to unite all Italy under one government. To be called the Italian Republic would best have pleased the people; but as, in that case, Rome must have been their capital, and affairs did not yet admit of such a change, they were denominated the Cisalpine*. To these new republics constitutions were given, after the most recent Paris fashion; an executive and two deliberative bodies. Bonaparte was desirous of giving to the last-created state a different form of constitution; but, being restrained by the Directory, he contented himself with nominating four out of five members of the Cisalpine government, which was formally installed at Milan†.

Negotiations for peace were proceeding between the Emperor and the Republic; in the course of which, Bonaparte, as plenipotentiary for his nation, shewed most conspicuously his lofty and his degrading characteristics. His sagacity prevented him from being allured or duped by any acts or professions of his opponents: he saw their difficulties, and was not unsusceptible of his own; he knew the strength of the Emperor and the hazards of his position too well, precipitately to hurry on a renewal of hostilities; but, conscious of his own powers, and confident in the bravery and attachment of his army, he would make no ill-considered sacrifices for the sake of peace. To the Austrian ministers he was courteous and considerate in his demeanour, but peremptory and inflexible on all points which he considered material to the advantage of France; while he considered himself, as a general, bound to execute the orders of his government so long only as they seemed reasonable and likely to succeed,—as a negotiator, he held himself neither obliged to execute instructions which were equivalent to a declaration of war, nor to renounce his mission, which with equal certainty would have produced that event‡. But with respect to people that had yielded

* Montholon, vol. iv. p. 179.

† Ibid. vol. iv. p. 192; *Homme d'Etat*, tome vi. p. 173.

‡ Montholon, vol. iv. p. 239.

to, or confided in him, he shewed an utter want of feeling, justice, and honour. In violation of all treaties, and in utter contempt of good faith, they were sacrificed, transferred, revolutionized, or plundered, at the discretion of their pretended friends, but real oppressors.

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Authorized to act for the Emperor, the Marquis De Gallo and Count Meerfeldt agreed with Bonaparte and General Clarke at a meeting at Montebello, that a definitive treaty, to be framed with the Emperor, in that quality, and that of King only, should be concluded, and ratified by both governments, before the opening of any negotiations for the peace of the empire, and in the mean time, the articles to be entirely secret. For the settlement of peace with the empire, negotiations were to be held on the first of July, to which no foreign power was to be admitted, unless either of the contracting parties would become their mediator, or it should be so stipulated in a definitive treaty.

Treaty of
Montebello.

May 24, 25.

Notwithstanding these arrangements, great obstacles to the speedy conclusion of a final arrangement arose. The timid politicians of Vienna, who, in their moments of alarm, had been willing to sacrifice the honour and the interests of their country, for the sake of temporary ease and delusive safety, were struck with shame and remorse when they saw the patriotic devotion of the hereditary states, their firm rejection of the blandishments, and resolute resistance of the arms, of France. The Emperor himself was conscious that he had not adequately encouraged and sustained the noble spirit of his people; yet it was not possible for him to recede, and his plenipotentiaries duly attended at Campo Formio, the place appointed.

Feelings in
Germany.

In France, many circumstances, arising alike out of political difficulties and the personal views and characters of the members of government, occasioned obstacles to the attainment of a speedy peace. The country at large desired it; but any gleam of military success was sufficient to re-animate their enthusiasm

State of
France.

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for war. The directors held adverse opinions; Carnot and Letourneur being desirous of terminating hostilities, while their colleagues were more solicitous for their duration. It was, probably, owing to the uncertain sway of these parties, that the commencement of operations on the Rhine was delayed until the army of Italy had achieved so much; and, probably, owing to a temporary ascendancy of the war-favouring party, that Hoche, superseding Beurnonville in the command of the army of the Sambre, passed the Rhine at Nieuweid, and gained some advantages; Moreau made a similar exertion, but the operations had been long delayed, and the intelligence of them did not reach Bonaparte until two days after the signature of the treaty of Leoben, which rendered them utterly useless. A definitive treaty was still postponed, principally through the state of the French republic, the intrigues of its rulers, the plots of their opponents, and attempts which, although not attended with bloodshed, brought about a new revolution. The directors, equally exposed to hatred and contempt, found their rule beset with difficulties which they had neither sufficient vigour or talent to surmount by any means which the constitution placed legally within their power. All the funds, which by the plunder of those whom they conquered or betrayed, or which tyrannical extortion could wring from the people of France, were dissipated, through a system void of economy and justice, and distinguished alike by rapacity in the directors, and profligate peculation in their subordinates. National honour was unknown, except in the field; and consequently the public mind was unfitted for any but a military rule, which no one of the directors was capable of exercising; and yet, while they foresaw that they must, in process of time, call in the aid of the army, they were jealous and afraid of every one of their generals; apprehensive that each of them, if he acquired importance, might claim ascendancy as its necessary sequel, or, if incapable of assuming it in his own person, might, by lending his aid to a favoured individual of

1797.

Progress of
royalism.

their body, assure to him the supreme rule, dismissing the others entirely, or reducing them to a mere nominal rank.

They were sensible that a wish for the restoration of royalty, either in the legitimate heir to the throne, or in a member of the Orléans family, was widely diffused, and daily gaining strength in France. Not unacquainted with the feelings of Pichegru on this subject, they had endeavoured to remove him by the offer of an embassy to Sweden; but this he had refused. Royalist clubs, formed in Paris and all the departments, aided by great exertions of the press, in the daily publication of newspapers and pamphlets, had so much effect, that, on the renewal of the Council of Five Hundred, by the change of one-third of their members, the dreaded party had a decided preference; Pichegru was returned as one, and, on the first sitting of the council, elected president. Barthélemy had been elected a director, in the place of Letourneur: he and Carnot formed a minority against Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveilliere; if not exactly royalists, distaste to their colleagues occasioned a mode of conduct and a party co-operation which afforded their adversaries the means of accusing them of sentiments favourable to regal power.

Troops approach Paris.

By the constitution, troops were not permitted to be drawn nearer than twelve leagues to the metropolis; but the proceedings of the Council of Five Hundred, the evasive conduct of the Directory, and the inflamed state of the public mind, made it obvious that a recourse to the military must become inevitable, and the greatest anxiety was felt to know on which side they would declare. So far as the solution of this question depended on Bonaparte, he speedily and unequivocally put it out of doubt. On the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, he issued a proclamation, at Milan, reminding his troops that they owed themselves entirely to the republic, to the happiness of thirty millions of Frenchmen. "Soldiers," he proceeded, "the country can never be exposed to real dangers. The same men who have enabled her to

Conduct of
Bonaparte.

July 14.

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"triumph over the coalition of all Europe are here. "Mountains separate us from France; you will pass them with the rapidity of the eagle's flight, to support the constitution, defend liberty, and protect the government and the republicans. The instant the royalists appear, they will cease to live. Let us swear implacable war against the enemies of the republic and the constitution of the year Three:" and an oath was taken accordingly.

15th.

His dispatch to the Directory was in the same spirit of firmness, but more explicit as to measures. "Danger," he said, "daily increases upon you, and it is time you should come to a decision: by one well-timed effort you may save the Republic, with two hundred thousand lives, which are inseparable from its lot, and conclude a peace in four-and-twenty hours. Arrest the emigrants; destroy the influence of foreigners; if you want strength, call in the armies to your aid, and crush the presses of the journals paid by England, which are more blood-thirsty than ever was that of Marat. If there are no means," he added, "to terminate the woes of the country, to put an end to murders, and to the influence of royalists, I solicit my discharge*."

Of Hoche.

Hoche, whose conduct had been exposed to severe animadversion in the Council, formed a strict alliance with Bonaparte, and was besides inspired with a strong personal hatred of Pichegru. Twelve thousand of his troops, artillery, infantry, and cavalry, were marched to Paris, under pretext of a new expedition against Ireland†. The Council of Five Hundred, remonstrating against this unconstitutional proceeding, their intimation was met, at first, with a flimsy evasion, afterward with haughty indifference. Although sensible of an imminent crisis, in which the struggle would be, not for ascendancy alone, but for existence, the opposition party displayed neither foresight nor vigour; their operations were confined to declamations and publications, which were little heeded by the majority of the

21st.

22nd.

Feebleness of
the royalist
party.

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. p. 451, 2, 3.

† Lacrételle, tome xiv. p. 68.

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August 10.

20th.

people; and resolutions and regulations which would only be attended to when supported by an adequate and determined force. Their adversaries diminished their credit and authority by stigmatizing them as royalists; a charge which they denied, and they made a vehement declaration on the subject, on the festival established to celebrate the overthrow of monarchy. Thus the contest lingered for several weeks: assured of the sentiments of the army of Italy, by addresses from many of its divisions, the directors caused a large portion of Hoche's army to assemble at Rheims; and by other indications, too plain to be mistaken, shewed their determination to bring on a crisis. On the other side, the clear apprehension of danger produced no worthy determination. Unlike those proud patriots who would resolutely advance to the execution of a plan which they deemed beneficial to their country; inferior even to those desperate and daring conspirators, who fearlessly present their persons to defy the stroke of power incensed by their own proceedings; these men announced by anticipation the failure of their own projects, and sought to secure, if possible, an ignominious safety: some provided themselves with passports, and others planned means of concealment or escape. The two councils had received from Tronçon du Coudray and Thibaudeau reports on the state of public affairs, censuring as unconstitutional the conduct of the Directory, and their profuse expenditure; recommending general reconciliation; disapproving the oath administered by Bonaparte to his army, and suggesting two laws for the prosecution of those who formed plots against the legislative body, the executive Directory, or any of their component members; and restraining the military from deliberative or collective acts.

Before the report of Thibaudeau was taken into consideration, the Directory executed their plan for annihilating all adverse prerogatives. It had been intended that Hoche should lead the troops which were collected; but difficulties intervening, and Bonaparte being too much engaged in the affairs of Italy to act in Paris, the command was, by his direction, in-

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trusted to Augereau, a general of rude and ruffianly character, distinguished by an ignorant republicanism, but devoid of all political capacity. Carnot and Barthélemy, already apprized that a grand commotion was to take place, attended, for the last time, a sitting of the Directory, where the proceedings left no doubt of the immediate approach of violence. Carnot, with great difficulty, made his escape, and reached a foreign country; but Barras, enraged at his flight, went with a party of guards, and himself arrested Barthélemy.

Revolution of
the dix-huit
Fructidor.

4th.

On the following day, General Ramel, commander of the legislative body guard, announced an order he had received at one o'clock in the morning, to attend the minister at war, and that several columns of troops were entering the city. To the military force thus employed, a feeble and unavailing resistance was made. A considerable number of members, having assembled at private houses, sallied forth in their scarfs, and attempted to gain the entrance of their halls, but were thrice repulsed by the military; while the minority of each legislative body met at a play-house, called Odéon, and in the amphitheatre of the Medical College, and made laws suited to the views of the triumvirate. They had prepared proclamations, declaring the existence of a plot to re-establish royalty, and directing that every individual who should be found demanding a king, the constitution of 1793, or proclaiming the Duke of Orléans, should be instantly shot, according to law. The Council of Five Hundred, sitting on the stage at the Odéon, while the boxes were filled with people instructed to applaud, formed a committee of five, consisting of Syeyes, Poulain-Grandpré, Villiers, Chazal, and Boulay de la Meurthe; voted thanks to the Directory for saving the country; and empowered them to permit the entrance within the constitutional circle of as many troops as they should deem necessary for defence of the constitution and the republic against royalism and anarchy. Reports were fabricated, explaining and justifying these proceedings, and laws passed annulling the elections in forty-nine

departments, and ordering the deportation of forty members of the Council of Five Hundred, including Generals Pichegru and Willot, Dumolard, Boissy-d'Anglas, Henry Lariviere, Camille Jourdan, and Pastoret; eleven of the Council of Ancients, among whom were Barbé-Marbois, Lafond-Ladebat, and Tronçon du Coudray. Carnot and Barthélemy were included in the list, as were Brothier, Lavilleheurnois, Duverne de Presle, and Ramel. The fate of all these victims was rendered additionally cruel by the sequestration of their property, till accounts should be received of their arrival at a place to be appointed by the Directory; which prevented them from procuring even the most common necessities for their comfort and accommodation in the voyage they were afterwards doomed to make. Laws of the greatest severity were enacted against emigrants and their relations; a new oath was imposed of hatred to royalty and anarchy, and attachment and fidelity to the republic and the constitution of the year three. All journals, periodical papers, and the presses for printing them, were put under the inspection of the police for a year; the late laws for reorganizing the national guard were abrogated; and the Directory were invested with the power of declaring any commune in a state of siege. In their exultation, the triumphant Directors shewed a total disregard of decency and humanity. Barthélemy and the imprisoned deputies were removed from the Temple in cages of iron, mounted on carriages, such as are used for the conveyance of wild beasts, and the triumvirate, anxious to enjoy the brutal and cowardly pleasure of contemplating their fallen adversaries, caused the cars to pass before the Luxembourg; and the walls of that palace re-echoed with mirthful plaudits which would have disgraced a horde of unenlightened savages. Seventeen of the victims were transported to Guiana, with circumstances of great harshness and cruelty; and the Directors, to secure their power, ordered at once the suppression of twenty-two newspapers. Before this event, some changes in the administration had taken

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place, the most material of which was the appointment of M. Talleyrand to the office of foreign affairs; the places of the two expelled directors were filled by Merlin and François de Neufchâteau*.

* From the day in their calendar on which this change was completed, it is called la Revolution du Dix-huit Fructidor. The events, with many more particulars than are above detailed, but with no material variance, are to be found in all the historical and periodical works. Also in an anonymous work, in two volumes, 8vo. Hamburg, 1799, entitled *Dix-huit Fructidor, ses Causes et Effets*. La Vallée, tome iii. p. 86, and pamphlets by some of the sufferers, entitled *Carnot's Reply to Bailleul*, *Ramel's Narrative*, *Secret Anecdotes of the Eighteenth of Fructidor*, and the *Narrative of J. J. Job Aimé*; all printed in French, translated and republished in London.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND THREE.

1797—1798.

Negotiation for Peace.—Letter of Lord Grenville.—Answer. Lord Malmesbury goes to Lisle.—Progress of the negotiation.—French plenipotentiaries changed.—Lord Malmesbury dismissed.—Victory of Admiral Duncan.—Mutinies. The Hermione.—Blockade of Cadiz.—Attempt on Santa Cruz.—Its ill success.—Nelson wounded.—His left arm amputated.—Just tributes to him.—Progress of negotiation between the Emperor and France.—Views of Bonaparte.—Treaty of Campo Formio.—Death of the King of Prussia. Policy of Bonaparte.—New Republics.—Congress of Rastadt.—Conduct of Bonaparte.—His progress to Rastadt.—He is recalled to Paris.—His reception at the Luxembourg. Army of England formed.—Proclamation.—Bonaparte's opinions.—Hostility against the Pope.—Illness of the Pope.—Artifices and violences of the French.—Revolution planned.—Conflict.—Duphot killed.—Revolution effected. Conduct and treatment of the Pope.—Rapacity of the French.—Wanton destruction.—Events in the West Indies. St. Domingo.—Canada.

WHEN the signatures of preliminaries between the Emperor and France appeared to offer an opportunity and present facilities for the renewal of pacific negotiations, Lord Grenville wrote to the French minister for foreign affairs, suggesting that, from the removal of obstacles, and the state of the interests to be treated of being less extensive and complicated than they had been, the time was favourable to a negotiation. An immediate answer from M. Delacroix announced the

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1797.
Negotiations
for peace.

Letter of Lord
Grenville.
June 1.
4th.
Answer.

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Lord
Malmesbury
goes to Lisle.

eagerness of his government to receive overtures, and to establish peace.

26th.

17th.

20th.

If this fair beginning ever generated a hope of final arrangement, the expectation was diminished by all subsequent proceedings. From the first moment of the negotiation, insults and evasions succeeded each other, proving that a specious appearance in the eyes of other powers, and the necessity of temporizing, created by their own internal state, were the real and only motives which guided the conduct of the enemy. Lisle was selected as the place for the meeting of the plenipotentiaries, on account of the facility of communication by telegraph, and its intermediate position between the capitals of the two countries. A passport was transmitted for a person "furnished with the full powers of his Britannic Majesty for concluding and signing "a definitive and separate treaty of peace." Some objections were made to this unusual mode of defining by anticipation the powers and objects of the negotiation; but, in admitting it, the King reserved to himself to agree to a preliminary or definitive treaty as circumstances might require; and to make such stipulations as might be necessary for his ally the Queen of Portugal; while, on the other hand, attention would be paid to any claims advanced on behalf of Spain or Holland; and Lord Malmesbury was designated as the intended plenipotentiary. In answer, the French minister observed that a different choice would have appeared to the Directory to augur more favourably for the speedy conclusion of peace; and intimated a desire that couriers should not be sent too frequently, as that had occasioned the rupture of the former negotiation. On these points, Lord Grenville only observed that the first did not require any answer, and that the circumstances which occasioned the rupture of the last negotiation being known to all Europe, the British government did not then think it necessary to recall them to recollection.

On his arrival at Lisle, Lord Malmesbury found Letourneur de la Manche, the late member of the Directory, Admiral Pleville le Pelley, and M. Maret, for-

merly ambassador at Naples. At their second interview, his lordship delivered a projet, in twenty articles. Antecedent treaties, from that of Nimeguen in 1678, to that of Versailles in 1783, were to form the basis of the arrangement; and a restitution of all territories taken during the war was to be made to France and her allies, except only the island of Trinidad, then recently captured from the Spaniards, and the Cape of Good Hope: some stipulations favourable to the Stadtholder were also introduced.

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July 18th.
Progress of
the negotia-
tion.

Fair and liberal as this proposal was, the answer of the French plenipotentiaries cast all hopes of arrangement to a very remote distance. They peremptorily required the renunciation of the title of King of France, borne by his Britannic Majesty; not merely of the rights pretended to be derived from it, but formally of the title itself, as it would imply the existence in France of an order of things which had been abolished: this proposition was not afterward alluded to in the course of the negotiation. The second demand was, the restitution of the vessels taken or destroyed at Toulon, or an equivalent; and the third, a renunciation on the part of his Britannic Majesty of the mortgage on Belgium.

10th.

In their first meeting after the exchange of these papers, the French ministers objected to the re-establishment of old treaties, which, being signed when France was a monarchy, any retrospect to those times implied a censure on their present form of government; they alluded also to the convention of Pilnitz. In a note delivered speedily afterward, they declared that the republic was bound to Spain and Holland by secret treaties, in which the three powers guaranteed to each other the territories possessed by each before the war; and therefore claimed, as an indispensable preliminary to negotiation, the restitution of all possessions occupied by Great Britain, not only of France, but of Spain and the Batavian republic. On this proposition, Lord Malmesbury made the obvious remark, that if it were required as a preliminary *sine qua non*, that every thing the King had conquered from all

13th.

15th.

16th.

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and each of his enemies should be restored, and that until this restoration was consented to, the negotiation was not even to begin, it would not only prevent any present treaty, but would leave no room for treating at all. His Majesty could not accede to the principle that the treaty was to be one of all cession and no compensation.

26th.

Entertaining the same views, Lord Grenville wrote to the ambassador that the natural step would have been to direct him to terminate at once a negotiation which, on the footing proposed, afforded neither the hope nor the means of any favourable conclusion. Ministers had, however, observed, that, in the conclusion of his lordship's conference, the president of the French mission had said that it was not intended to resist all compensation for the immense extent of restitution demanded, and that he and his colleagues would eventually bring forward proposals on the subject; with the view, therefore, of leaving nothing untried which could contribute to restore peace on any suitable terms, his Majesty directed Lord Malmesbury to ask another conference, at which, in addition to his general objections, he might remark, that even if, contrary to all reason, such a principle could have been admitted, still it could only apply to public treaties, known to those who agreed to be governed by them, and not to secret articles, undisclosed even to the French plenipotentiaries, or concealed by one of them from the knowledge of the others. On the mention of the treaty of Pilnitz, Lord Grenville observed, that it certainly would not require much argument to prove that the renewal of several treaties enumerated by name and date, and the latest of which was in 1783, would not imply a renewal of another supposed to be concluded in 1791. But the ambassador was ordered to explain, most distinctly and unequivocally, that if any secret treaty was, in fact, entered into at the interview at Pilnitz, between the late Emperor and the King of Prussia (which, to say the least, was very doubtful in point of fact), his Majesty was no party, nor then included, nor had he ever adopted, nor even been apprized of its contents. This

explanation, however, little connected with the present negotiation, seemed to be called for by the allusion which had been made; and, indeed, on a point on which so much misrepresentation had prevailed, it was useful not to omit the opportunity of stating the real facts.

It was not difficult to anticipate that a negotiation so commenced and conducted must terminate unsuccessfully. In vain Lord Malmesbury pressed for a contre-projet; and when he remonstrated against the delays so obviously sought and created, he received frivolous or evasive answers. The conduct of the French is easily explained by a reference to the state of their government already described; the people and a majority of their representatives desirous of peace, while a mere majority of the directors and the army were adverse to any arrangement, with England at least. An appearance of intending to treat was kept up, and, conscious that the blame of procrastination was due to themselves alone, the directors sent a message, and some deputies argued upon it as a fact, that delays had proceeded only from their adversaries, and that their eagerness to break off the negotiation was equalled only by their slowness to commence it. When appealed to on this subject, the answer of the French was, that the message had only been framed to stimulate the councils.

When the eighteenth of Fructidor had established the ascendancy of the non-pacific party, Treilhaut and Bonnier d'Alco were substituted for the three original plenipotentiaries, who, in retiring, explicitly declared that they could not terminate their mission without expressing, to the English ambassador, the satisfaction they had felt from the openness and candour with which he had acted during the whole negotiation, or take leave of him without expressing their sincere personal regrets; his conduct having given him the strongest title to their esteem and good wishes.

Soon after the arrival of the new commissioners, the shew of negotiation was ended. At their first conference, they demanded from Lord Malmesbury an

September.
French
Plenipotenti-
aries changed.

15th.
Lord Malmes-
bury dismissed.

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explicit declaration, to be delivered in the course of the day, whether he had sufficient powers for restoring, in the treaty which might be concluded, to the French republic and to its allies, all the possessions which, since the beginning of the war, had passed into the hands of the English. His lordship answered that he had already, in his conference with their predecessors, given a full and unequivocal declaration on this subject; to avoid all misunderstanding, he said he neither could nor ought to treat on any other principle than that of compensations; a principle which had been formally recognized as the basis of a treaty equally just, honourable, and advantageous to the two powers. In reply, Messrs. Treilhard and Bonnier apprized the ambassador of a decree of the Executive Directory, that, in case he should declare himself not to have the necessary authority for agreeing to all the restitutions which the laws and the treaties binding the French republic made indispensable, he should be ordered to return, in four and twenty hours, to his court, to ask for sufficient powers. To this, as if in mockery, it was added, that the Directory shewed in this proceeding nothing but an intention to hasten the moment when the negotiation might be followed up with the certainty of a speedy conclusion. His lordship of course demanded passports for himself and suite, and returned to his own country, cheered with the cordial approbation of his sovereign and his ministers. The French ordered their plenipotentiaries still to remain at Lisle, pretending to believe that Lord Malmesbury would yet return, and citing this proceeding as a proof of their sincerity*.

* From the papers laid before Parliament. A foreign writer, whose work I have frequently cited, gives an extraordinary specimen of insidious chicanery exhibited during this transaction. A few days after the eighteenth of Fructidor, Lord Malmesbury received a note from the Comte de Montgaillard, soliciting a private interview, at seven in the morning, at an appointed place on the ramparts. The Count was not unknown by character. In 1794, he had fled from the reign of terror to London, but had been expelled under the Alien Act. As attached to the army of the Prince of Condé, he had mixed himself up in the negotiation with Pichegru; but his conduct was, in that matter, not exempt from suspicion. When Lord Malmesbury saw him on the ramparts, he pointed out the danger he incurred of being shot, and advised him instantly to escape. Not alarmed at a danger, which, most probably, he had no occasion to fear, the Count gave a narra-

During the time occupied in negotiation, the French were anxiously pursuing their project of gaining the mastership of the Channel, by the union of their fleet with those of their allies, one portion of which had already been frustrated by Lord St. Vincent. A fleet of fifteen sail of the line, with a proper number of frigates, under Admiral De Winter, collected in the Texel, and destined to convey fifteen thousand troops to assist the disaffected in Ireland, to whom notice of their progress was regularly transmitted, had been watched throughout the summer by Admiral Duncan. In the unhappy and disgraceful period of the mutiny, he was left with only two ships of the line; but, by judicious signals, he led the enemy into a belief that his force was undiminished. On the return of the mariners to their duty, he was rejoined by his absent vessels; but want of provisions obliged him, in the autumn, to retire into Yarmouth. De Winter, who had been urged by repeated messages from the French and from his own government, considering this a favourable opportunity, put to sea, hoping merely to gain the port of Brest, and leaving on shore the force intended for Ireland. Duncan had revictualled his fleet, and saw with joy the signal made by Captain Trollope, whom he had left with a small squadron of observation, that the Dutch were at sea. Anxious to prevent them from regaining their port, he executed the bold and masterly manœuvre of placing himself between them and a lee shore, and succeeded in bringing on a general engagement. In force, there was not much numerical disparity; but the advantage was on the side of the enemy. The commanders of both fleets were men of great skill and experience; the vessels well equipped; and the crews brave and de-

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1797.

Victory of
Admiral
Duncan.

July and Aug.

October 9.

11th.

tive of the late events in Paris. The persons to be transported, he said, were to be embarked at Rochefort, in a vessel that was well known; and if his lordship would write to his government to order three or four frigates to sail to the western coast of France, the parties might be intercepted and rescued, and the event would cause a great commotion in the country. The ambassador's experience and judgment could not be deluded by this shallow contrivance; he refused compliance, and firmly, though politely, dismissed the intriguer from his presence. Had he listened to his proposal, he had no doubt that his messenger would have been intercepted, and his letter seized and published, for the purpose of casting disrepute on him and his government. *Homme d'Etat*, tome v. p. 108.

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terminated. After a sanguinary contest of four hours, the Dutch had the mortification to see eight sail of the line, two vessels of fifty-six, and a frigate of forty-four guns, remaining prizes in the hands of the victors. Admiral De Winter, who surrendered only after his ship, the *Vryheid*, was reduced almost to a wreck, gave up his sword to the British commander; and Vice Admiral Reyntjies, mortally wounded, surrendered to Admiral Onslow: they experienced the generous politeness which the brave never withhold from the unfortunate*.

Mutinies.

If the French entertained hopes of success against our navy, from a belief in the dissemination of principles of insubordination among the crews, they were not altogether void of foundation; and some circumstances led to an opinion that they had an influence in causing them. Beside the great and alarming display at Spithead, the Nore, and off the Texel, it appears that, in various quarters, no less than seventy-nine courts martial were held, in different ships, in the course of the year, for mutiny and mutinous behaviour; some on individuals singly, others on numbers in combination. On board the *Saint George*, of ninety-six guns, one of the fleet under Lord St. Vincent, a dangerous mutiny, to prevent the execution of three condemned malefactors, and to seize the ship, was suppressed by the intrepidity of the officers; and, at the Cape of Good Hope, an outbreak, attended with circumstances similar to those at the Nore, was carried to a considerable extent, by almost all the crews at the station; but it was subdued by the threat of firing on the ships from the batteries with red-hot ball. One case, which did not form the subject of a legal investigation, is peculiarly remarkable. The frigate *Hermione* had recently sailed from Cape Nicola Mole, when the crew rose, murdered their captain and their officers, and ran

August 15.

October.

The frigate
Hermione.

* *Gazettes*; Admiral De Winter's dispatch to his own government; and all the historical and periodical works. See also Wolfe Tone, vol. ii. p. 452, who expresses severe censure against the Dutch government for sending out their fleet at that season, without motive or object, and gives his opinion that there was direct treason, and that the fleet was sold to Pitt: an opinion of itself of very little value, unless it be true, as he adds, that Barras, Pleville le Pelley, and even Meyer, the Dutch ambassador, formed a similar judgment.

the vessel into La Guira, where the Spaniards rewarded the murderers with twenty-five dollars each, and sent the ship on a cruise, under their own flag, making William Farmer, the principal conspirator, second captain, and giving him the command over most of his associates in murder and robbery*.

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After the glorious battle off St. Vincent's, the noble commander most judiciously employed Admiral Nelson to command the inner division of the fleet blockading the harbour of Cadiz ; in the course of which service, he displayed his usual valour in bombarding the city, and in several actions with gun-boats and other vessels. On such information as led to a belief that an attack on the town of Santa Cruz, in the island of Teneriffe, was practicable, and that, beside other advantages, a large treasure, brought from Manilla in *El Principe d'Asturias*, belonging to the Philippine Company, would be the reward of the victor, Nelson projected, and Lord St. Vincent acceded to, a plan for attacking the town. He was dispatched, with three ships of the line and four frigates, but unprovided with a body of troops, which he had represented as necessary—a thousand seamen and marines being deemed sufficient. Regular operations were not to be attempted ; a coup-de-main was the only hope ; and, in the expectation of success, a summons was framed requiring the surrender of the Manilla ship, and promising, if that were complied with, an abstinence from all levying of contributions, and the utmost respect for the religion, laws, and property of the inhabitants. Prudent regulations were also framed for the government of the crews and marines. The Spaniards were not in much greater force than was expected ; but the difficulties of the coast, with a want of accurate knowledge of its bearings, the state of the weather, the non-execution of some orders, and, above all, the many circumstances which prevented the secrecy necessary to success, enabled the enemy to place and employ their troops to the utmost advantage.

Blockade of
Cadiz.

May 29.

July 2 to 8.

Attempt on
Santa Cruz.

15th.

20th.

* Barrow's Life of Earl Howe, p. 321. Annual Register, vol. xxxix. pp. 54, 55 ; vol. xl. p. 12.

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24.
Its ill success.

25.

A feint was made, as if the heights were to be attacked; but the real plan was to land from several divisions of boats at the Mole, and push for the great square, where the several divisions were to form, and act as occasion might require. At eleven o'clock, in a dark night, the boats advanced under most inauspicious circumstances. The commanders were unacquainted with the coast, the wind unfavourable, and the surf running tremendously high. Captain Troubridge, of the Culloden, who led one division, effected a landing under the batteries to the southward of the citadel, while Captain Waller, with three or four boats under his command, landed at the same instant. Many other boats were obliged to put back, and those from which the invaders landed were filled with water and dashed to pieces against the rocks, while the ammunition which the men carried was spoiled by the water, and the ladders to be used in assailing the citadel were all lost. At day-break, Captain Troubridge, with eighty marines, as many pikemen, and one hundred and eighty men with small arms, had advanced to the great square, but found himself unsupported by any other body. However, incompetent as he was to any effectual enterprise, he sent to summon the citadel, and, receiving no answer, was disposed to advance even to a hopeless attempt, but found every street of the town commanded by field pieces, and eight thousand Spaniards and one hundred French approaching by every avenue. Thus encountered, he sent a flag of truce, with proposals to retreat, on his troops being allowed to re-embark in their own boats, if they were saved, or in others to be supplied by the Spaniards. Were these terms granted, he would leave the town uninjured; if not, he would set it on fire in every quarter. It was intimated that the troops ought to surrender as prisoners of war; but the British Captain declaring that, unless his proposition was accepted in five minutes, he would execute his threat, and also attack the Spaniards at the point of the bayonet, the governor, Don Juan Antonio Gutierrez, granted all that was required.

Admiral Nelson, aided by Captains Freemantle and Bowen, landed to storm the Mole, in which they succeeded so far as to spike the guns; but, by a heavy fire of musketry and grape-shot, from the citadel and the houses, were almost all killed or wounded. Captain Bowen was in the former, Captain Freemantle in the latter predicament. Nelson shared but little in this exploit. At the moment of putting his foot on shore, his left arm was shattered by a ball; he was immediately taken on board his ship; an amputation was unskilfully performed, and his condition was so dangerous and his health so much impaired, that he found it necessary, without loss of time, to return to England. It is pleasant to terminate this narrative of bloodshed with an observation that between these brave parties, when the conflict of hostility had ceased, the amenities of peace and mutual esteem were restored. The Spaniards celebrated a grand Te Deum 27. for their deliverance; but, far from being insulted by any signs of brutal triumph or ferocious exultation, the British troops marched through the town to their re-embarkation with their own colours flying, and without an ungracious expression from the Spaniards, who, on the contrary, shewed eagerness in relieving their wants and contributing to their comforts. Nelson, whose spirits never failed in the midst of his agonies both of body and mind, maintained a friendly intercourse with the governor, in which, amidst expressions of generous esteem and consideration, the civility of small presents was interchanged; and the British Admiral, when retiring to Europe, conveyed the dispatches of the governor; he put them on shore at Cadiz, and so was actually the first to make the court of his enemy acquainted with the circumstances of his own defeat.

In killed, wounded, and missing, our loss in this attempt was returned at two hundred and fifty-one men; and however the nation might regret the failure of hopes and the sacrifice of lives, no feeling but of admiration and regard prevailed in the public mind with respect to Admiral Nelson. The Earl of St.

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Nelson
wounded.

His left arm
amputated.

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Just tributes
to Nelson.

December 17.

 Progress of
negotiation
between the
Emperor and
France.
May 5.

 Views of
Bonaparte.
May 26.

Vincent spoke of him, in his dispatches, in terms of eulogy becoming a brave man, elevated above the meanness of petty rivalry and professional jealousy. His presence, wherever he appeared, was hailed with popular acclamation: the freedom of London, which had been voted to him, was presented in a gold box, with an appropriate speech from the Chamberlain, John Wilkes; the Prince of Wales and Duke of Clarence honoured him with consoling civilities; and, beside the order of the Bath and the gold medal which he had received after the victory off St. Vincent's, the King bestowed on him a pension of £1000. When he was able to appear at Court, his gracious Sovereign noticed his services and condoled on his misfortunes with equal dignity and feeling; and the Admiral expressed his acknowledgments with becoming devotedness*.

During these events, negotiations for converting the preliminary articles, signed at Leoben, into a definitive treaty were proceeding: conferences were held at Montebello, Udino, and Passeriano. Full authority had been formally given to Generals Bonaparte and Clarke to conclude and sign a definitive arrangement with the Emperor, treating him only as King of Hungary and Bohemia, and excluding all other powers, especially England. The directors now did not intend to adhere to the preliminaries of Leoben: the interests of the Emperor, the state of the empire, the danger from the growing greatness of the King of Prussia, and his claims to rival, or in some particulars to precede, the acknowledged head of the Germanic body, were all subjects of uneasiness. The views of Bonaparte were clearly explained in a dispatch to the Directory. It appeared to him that there was less repugnance to granting the Rhine as a boundary than to increasing the power of the King of Prussia, and overturning the Germanic empire; a system which, if it did not exist, ought, he said, to be created expressly for the advantage of France. "Venice," he observed,

* *Gazettes*; *Annual Register*, vol. xxxix. pp. 265, *78; *Biographies of Nelson*, by Harrison, Churchill, and Southey; and in the *Naval Chronicle*.

“ which has been going to decay ever since the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, and the rise of Trieste and Ancona, can hardly survive the blow we have inflicted on her. We will take their ships, empty their arsenal, carry off all their cannon, and destroy their bank. We will keep Corfu and Ancona: the first shall be stipulated in the treaty; the other, which we have, becomes every day more formidable, and we will retain it until the change of affairs in Rome shall make it irrevocably our own*.”

Not from the multiplicity of objects, the efforts of usurpation and injustice, the difficulty of adjusting balances of spoliation and compensation alone, was the progress of the plenipotentiaries delayed. The conflict in Paris, which was terminated by the 18th of Fructidor, occasioned at once hesitation and doubt in the proceedings of the directors, imparted hopes to the Emperor of benefits to arise from delay, and irritated Bonaparte, who, like the minority in the Directory, expected greater advantages from an immediate peace than from renewed hostilities†. It was evident that the Directory wished for war; but was anxious that the responsibility of the rupture should rest entirely with their negotiators. When they believed their own power firmly established, they sent their ultimatum, refusing to give up to the Emperor either Venice or the line of the Adige, or, in other words, a declaration of hostilities. War or peace thus depending on the decision of Bonaparte, he signed, at Campo Formio, a treaty on the terms settled at Montebello: there was, besides, a secret treaty, containing stipulations injurious to Prussia, and which, at a subsequent period, attracted much attention‡.

Treaty of
Campo Formio.
October 17.

By this treaty, it is justly observed, the Emperor had only gained an armistice||, subject to many con-

Death of the
King of Prussia.

* Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. p. 403.

† Dispatches to the Directory, 2nd and 12th July; Œuvres de Napoléon, tome i. pp. 444, 462.

‡ Montholon's Memoirs of the History of France, dictated by Napoléon, vol. iv. pp. 240, 241; Homme d'État, tome viii. p. 19.

|| Homme d'État, tome v. p. 54.

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November 17.

tingencies, from the views of discordant members of the empire, and the resolutions which might be framed in the congress at Rastadt. Prussia, by her neutrality, had neutralized the north, and infused a similar spirit into many circles of the south of Germany; but, at the moment of its sitting, Frederick William the Second ceased to influence the affairs of the Continent. For the last two years, his health had been visibly declining, and his activity reduced to intrigue alone. His constitution was destroyed, and his frame debilitated by excess of every kind: he had resorted to stimulants, to force the efforts of jaded nature; to the last, he loaded his stomach with indigestible food, and retained mistresses who, without contributing to his happiness, disgusted all around him by their rapacity; and his thoughtless profusion had reduced him to extreme financial distress. In his reign of eleven years and three months, he had added to his territories two thousand two hundred square miles, and to his subjects two millions five hundred thousand souls. The acquisition of Dantzick, with a river passing through the centre of his new dominions, promised a vast addition to his commercial resources, while he had augmented his army by twenty-five thousand men. Yet his measures often produced effects tending to the disadvantage of his people, and his efforts to depress the Emperor threw his country helpless into the arms of France. At the time of his death, he was shewing at once his subserviency and want of integrity, by meditating an invasion of Hanover, in order, as it was pretended, to compel the English government to sue for peace. He had dissipated the treasure amassed by Frederick the Great; and, notwithstanding the benefits derived from the partition of Poland, left his successor, Frederick William the Third, to repair the faults of his reign by undeviating prudence and rigid economy. The young monarch, only twenty-three years of age, could not be expected to depart at once from the political system of his father: advised by the same counsellors and actuated by the same impressions, he did not attempt

any measure affecting the general welfare of Europe, but confined himself to acts of prudence, justice, and economical reform*.

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Policy of
Bonaparte.

In the hasty and self-willed conclusion of the treaty of Campo Formio, Bonaparte had shewn himself a consummate statesman, not more in contemning the false policy of the feeble government for which he was acting, than in securing the preponderance of France in all future contingencies; in creating rivalships to produce discord among those powers from which she would have most to apprehend, and in planting and supporting democratic republics, to incite or encourage a disposition to reject known and experienced forms of government, for the pursuit of nominal liberty, without even a shew of independence or a claim to respect. Those which had been established were the Cisalpine, the Cispadane, and the Ligurian: they were formed and modelled, and the elections to the legislative assemblies managed, to exclude the influence of the church, and to give ascendancy to those who were disposed to invade both religion and property. The Cisalpine, comprising Lombardy, the Bergamsco, Cremasco, Bresciano, Mantua, and Peschiera, with the fortifications to the right bank of the Adige and the Po; to Modena, Ferrara, the Bolognese, and Romagna, with a population of three million five hundred thousand inhabitants. The Cispadan included the Bolognese, the Ferrarese, Romagna, some portion of the territory of Venice, Rovigo, part of the Trevisan, and the isles of the Archipelago, having a population of sixteen or eighteen hundred thousand inhabitants. The Ligurian was to consist of the imperial fiefs, Genoa, and the Genoese states, excepting the Gulph of Spezzia. In the treaty of Campo Formio, the Emperor submitted to these new allotments of territory, while the French meditated not only the establishment of fresh republics in Italy, but the invasion, spoliation, and revolutionizing of Naples, Rome,

New Republics.

* Ségur, Règne de Frederic Guillaume II. tome iii. p. 241; Homme d'État, tome v. p. 25.

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Congress of
Rastadt.

November 18.

and other countries, to which ambition or avarice allured them*.

In expectation of the approaching congress, Rastadt was crowded with a prodigious concourse of foreigners, the ministers, ambassadors, and plenipotentiaries of France, and of all the sovereignties of Germany. Treilhard and Bonnier d'Arco were the members of legation from France; and with a residue of the sans-culotte taste, mistaken for republican firmness, they affected an extraordinary plainness of appearance. In the midst of an assembly dignified by lofty titles and displaying a corresponding splendour in their habiliments, these deputies from a government which gave offence by its fantastic display of theatrical finery, appeared in the plainest suits, never quitted their round hats, and fastened their shoes with strings. The circumstance is in itself utterly unimportant, but it receives some value as a trait of character†.

Conduct of
Bonaparte.

September 16.

At this assembly Bonaparte did not appear until after some delay, although he was expected to take a high position in the discussions. In his dispatches, he expressed to the directors great anxiety at the death of Hoche‡, which had recently occurred, and a wish to retire from public life. He had spoken to them of his arrangements for the government of liberated Italy, as the last service he could render to his country. His health, he said, was irreparably shattered; and he trusted that they had formed a commission of publicists to organize the governments of Italy. He professed himself seriously

* See the treaty of Campo Formio in the collections, and *Œuvres de Napoléon*, tome i. pp. 366, 396, tome ii. p. 69. One consequence of this treaty, interesting to Englishmen only, as it prevented the renewal of an ill-timed motion in the House of Commons, was the liberation of Lafayette and his fellow prisoners, at the request or perhaps dictation of the French general. There was some display of stoutness on the part of Lafayette as to the terms in which he should undertake never again to appear in the dominions of the Emperor: he was set free, and his benefactor lived to experience his gratitude.

† *Homme d'État*, tome v. p. 55.

‡ He died in the thirty-sixth year of his age, after a languishing malady of some duration. It is generally believed that the irregularities of his life hastened his decease. A rumour was circulated, and obtained the belief of some, that poison was administered by order of the Directory, whom he had sternly reprimanded for their conduct toward him after the 18th of Fructidor: a report of physicians was cited; but the imputation is probably untrue.—*Lacretelle*, tome xiv. p. 128.

affected at being obliged to desist, when, probably, all that remained to be done was to reap the harvest; but he could hardly get on horseback, and wanted two years of repose. "Nothing now remains for me," he said in another letter, "but to re-enter the crowd; to take the plough-share of Cincinnatus; to give an example of respect for the magistracy, and aversion for the military system, which has destroyed so many republics and ruined not a few states*."

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Not long after writing these dispatches, he set out for Rastadt, but not like an invalid requiring two years of repose, or a conqueror, weary of arms, seeking happiness in rustic employment. He sent before him his aid-de-camp Murat, and his lady, who had maintained in Italy a royal state; receiving the homage and the gifts of the conquered. His own progress from Milan resembled a triumphal march. The King of Sardinia added to his prostrate submission presents of great value. Geneva, Berne, and Lausanne vied with each other in pompous displays and abject compliments; and Basle reached that extreme of adulation which borders on burlesque, in an assurance that Switzerland leaped for joy at the sight of him, and that the whole human race expected their happiness at his hands.

His progress
to Rastadt.

At Rastadt, Bonaparte expected, as chief plenipotentiary of the French Republic, to meet Count Cobentzl, who sustained that character on the part of the Emperor; but, on his arrival, he found an official dispatch from the Directory, procured, it is said, by Barras, requiring his immediate attendance, that they might confer with him on the great and multifarious concerns of the country. This order, from whatever cause it might proceed, was truly welcome to the general, as it gave him the opportunity of enjoying, without seeming to seek them, the gratulations, the applauses, and the signs of future submission from the people of that capital, where the directors had only sufficient

He is recalled
to Paris.
Nov. 25.

* Dispatches to the Minister of the Exterior and to the Directory, 1st and 10th October, 1797; *Cœuvres*, tome ii. pp. 64, 72; *Homme d'État*, tome v. p. 72.

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power to maintain a tottering authority, and, while overwhelmed with hatred, just to escape contempt. His stay, therefore, at Rastadt was but short; sufficient only to afford a few displays of his temper in the peremptory tone in which he addressed the Count de Fersen, plenipotentiary from Sweden, reproaching the government of that country for having sent, to set at nought (*narguer*) the ministers of the first nation on earth, a man whose connexion with the old court of France was well known*.

His reception.
December 4.

His progress to Paris was a contrast to his advance to Rastadt: he traversed France incognito, and alighted, without any announcement, at his small house in the Rue Chantierine, in the Chaussée d'Antin. But the joy and the admiration of the people were only augmented by this reserve. From all quarters he received testimonials of regard and affection. The municipal body, the administrators of the department, and the councils, vied with each other in these displays. The street in which his house stood had its name changed, by order of the municipality, to Rue de la Victoire. It was proposed, in the Council of Ancients, to bestow on him the estate of Chambon, and a mansion in Paris; but the Directory took alarm, and the gift was not exactly negatived, but suppressed. The place in the National Institute, in the class of mechanics, vacant through the banishment of Carnot, was accepted by Bonaparte, and many fêtes were given in his honour, particularly one of extraordinary splendour by Talleyrand. On these, as on all other occasions, he shewed the greatest prudence. He gave no encouragement to the leaders of any political party, but generally received into his society only a few men of science and a small number of generals and of deputies; he affected no splendour in his dress; at the festivals given in his honour, his stay was short, and his conduct unobtrusive; and he cautiously repressed attempts to celebrate him at the theatre.

At the
Luxembourg.

Urged by public opinion, rather than prompted by

* *Homme d'État*, tome v. page 61.

their own inclinations, the directors gave him a public reception at the Luxembourg, when he was to present the imperial ratification of the treaty of Campo Formio. To gratify an immense concourse of spectators, the audience took place, not within the walls, but in the great court of the palace. While the directors affected a more than royal display of grandeur and finery, the general abstained from all personal pomp; he refused a guard of honour, and, attended only by his aide-de-camp, Marshal Marmont, entered, under a canopy formed of the trophies he had gained, an amphitheatre, in which were seated the directors, surrounded with ministers, generals, the whole diplomatic body, and every person of note and distinction in the capital; and there was an altar inscribed "to the country," adorned also with trophies of victory. The whole assembly rose to hail the entrance of Bonaparte, while the numerous assemblage, who had shewn but little emotion at sight of their splendid rulers, testified the superior estimation in which they held their young and successful general, by a deafening acclamation. In answer to a speech from Talleyrand, Bonaparte spoke of the liberty of Europe, as assured by the peace which had followed the conquests of France, and which would be perfected when the happiness of that nation was established on a better system of organic laws.

On all occasions, the popularity of Bonaparte appeared, if possible, to augment, and the soldiers who had served under him were known to have declared, that it was time for the lawyers to be laid aside, and the general made king. The directors, concealing their jealousy under a shew of zealous regard and attachment, offered him superior place at the Congress of Rastadt, which he declined; they called him to their councils with great form and ceremony; allowed him to sit with them and deliver his opinions as an absolute equal, and communicated to him not only their views and plans, but the particulars of their secret intelligence*.

* Lacrételle, tome xiv. page 129; Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon*, vol. iv. page 36; Las Cases, pt. iv. page 73; La Vallée, tome iii. page 86.

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10th.
Army of
England
formed.

October.

A project of vaunted importance was put forward by the Directory to fix the attention of the people, to animate their hopes, and feed their vengeful passions: the invasion and conquest of England. In announcing such a scheme, they incurred no risque of displeasing or disgusting their subjects by the use of terms, however offensive or boastful; and, accordingly, when the state of the Continent appeared to permit it, they announced that there should instantly be assembled, on the shores of the ocean, a force to be called the army of England; the citizen-general, Bonaparte, to have the command. They issued a proclamation, heaping on this country unmeasured charges of perfidy, cowardice, and cruelty, and assuming to their own all the opposite qualities. The Republic loved its friends, and punished its enemies without hating them. From their natural generosity, they did not hate even the English nation; but every body in France was of one mind, to bear in recollection Toulon, Dunkirk, Quiberon, and La Vendée; to detest and curse the cruelty, the tyranny, and bloody machiavelism, of the British ministry; while they deplored the inconceivable blindness with which the nation permitted itself to be held up in horror to the whole world. For the great nation to avenge the universe, more means than one presented themselves; but the most speedy and certain was an invasion. Let the army of England go and dictate peace in London; there, and in Ireland, they were sure of auxiliaries. Seconded by the national wish of their whole country, led by the hero who so often had placed them in the path to victory, they would have the acclamation of every lover of virtue and justice; they would re-establish the liberty of the seas, restrain the unbounded ambition of the English government, and secure the repose of the public and of all Europe. And, as the English government at that very moment, coldly smiling, beheld, with a ferocious joy, the disasters of the Continent, and vaunted its own opulence, it must be made, as was but just, to pay its quota toward the expenses of a war protracted by itself alone. To effect all this, nothing

was necessary but for the army of England to recollect the glory which, on so many occasions, it had already acquired, by its invincible enthusiasm; it was sufficient to hear the voice of their country, and recollect their own exploits*.

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This unusually absurd rodomontade was ordered to be printed, posted, read, and solemnly published in every commune of the republic, in every division of the land and sea forces, and inserted in the bulletin of the laws. That it expressed the feelings and wishes of the French government, could not be doubted; but that it did not disclose their hopes or expectations is equally certain. The Directory, by an impolitic decree, had ordered the confiscation of all English merchandizes; a measure little injurious to the nation it was intended to affect, but bringing ruin on the maritime towns of France, and on numerous individuals engaged in commerce†. An ineffectual attempt was also made to prejudice the interests of Great Britain by a treaty with Portugal; but the negotiator for that country, having exceeded his authority, the Queen refused to ratify the compact.

Aug. 21.

Bonaparte, from whom the Directory sought advice with respect to the proposed invasion, had stimulated them by his declarations, arising from his characteristic and never-ceasing hatred of England; but, at the same time, his judgment and military experience supplied counsel calculated to repress over-weening hope. Early in the year, he expressed a sentiment which distinguished him in after life, and materially influenced his fortunes. "The English have engrossed the
"hatred and execration of the Continent to such a
"degree, that, if the war continues some time, they
"will no longer be received in any country‡." At a
later period, when the expectations of power on the Continent were become certain, and when a wish for peace was generally prevalent, he spoke of the interests and feelings of several countries, and having named Venice, and how little the revolutionizing of

Bonaparte's
opinions.

April 1.

Oct. 10.

* *Moniteur du 3 Frimaire*, an 6. (23rd Nov. 1797).

† *La Vallée*, tome iii, p. 120.

‡ *Œuvres*, tome i. p. 327.

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Nov. 5.

that country was worth, he said, "The war with England will open to us a field more ample, more essential, and of a more glorious activity. The English people are of more worth than the Venetian, and the liberation of that country will consolidate for ever the liberty and happiness of France. Or, if we compel that government to make peace, our commerce, the advantages which we shall obtain for it in both worlds, will form a great step toward the consolidation of liberty and public prosperity*." Such were the sentiments expressed by a man whose talents and sagacity merited, and whose popularity and influence could command, attention; but when his mind was directed practically and specifically to the subject of invasion, he presented to his government a list of requisites, which, in the existing state of affairs, afforded no ground of hope, but many of discouragement and even despair. "To effect, with any probability of success, the expedition against England," he said, "we must have good naval officers, a great number of troops, well commanded, to threaten several points, and assure the provisions for the army; a firm and intelligent admiral," and he recommended Truguet; thirty millions (£1,250,000) in specie; and he added that excellent maps of England had been in possession of Hoche, which must be obtained from his heirs†. Still, whatever might be his internal opinions, Bonaparte made every preparation in conformity with the apparent intentions of his government. He put the columns of the army of Italy in march toward the coast of the ocean, and employed General Andréossy to obtain in Paris cannon of the same calibre with the English, and to make necessary arrangements in the artillery service‡. In the public audience at the Luxembourg already mentioned, Barras, in terms consorting with the bombastic proclamation addressed to the people, said, "Go, citizen General, and, by the chastisement of the cabinet of London, terrify those foolish govern-

* Œuvres, tome ii. p. 71. † Ibid. tome ii. p. 82. ‡ Ibid. p. 92.

“ments which may still attempt to undervalue the power of a free people. Let the conquerors of the Po, the Rhine, and the Tyber, follow your footsteps: the ocean will be proud to carry them; the ocean is an untamed slave, which, blushing to wear chains, invokes, by its roaring, the vengeance of the earth upon the tyrannical oppressors of its waves; the ocean will fight for you; to a free man, the very elements are submissive. Hardly will the three-coloured standard display itself on those blood-stained shores, when an unanimous shout of blessings will announce your presence, and that generous nation, perceiving the dawn of happiness, will hail you as deliverers, come not to combat and enslave them, but to terminate their woes*.” To this extract of vulgar verbose folly, and the answers and addresses from the merchants of Paris and others†, a large addition might be made; but the government did not at the time intend an invasion. The assembling of a fleet; the dispersion of an army over several provinces; the appointment of their most renowned general, his visits to the troops, his proclamation to the sailors in the fleet of Admiral Brueys, and many other measures ostentatiously taken, were but the means used to conceal an intended expedition, the causes and progress of which must hereafter be detailed.

Sept. 12.

In the two years that Bonaparte had commanded in Italy, that country, besides bearing its own military and necessary expenses, had been despoiled of four hundred millions (nearly £17,000,000)‡, and it might have been expected that, when no disposition to create a contest in any part presented an occasion of offence, the little which remained of ancient forms and cherished institutions might have been left untouched; but there still remained somewhat to inflame the pride and allure the cupidity of France. From the moment when a treacherous and insecure treaty, dearly purchased, assured to the Pope the enjoyment of his

Hostility
against the
Pope.

* Lacrételle, tome xiv. p. 187.

† A collection of them was published at the time by Wright of Piccadilly.

‡ Homme d'État, tome v. page 11.

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impoverished and degraded dominions, avarice, ambition, and irreligion, were strenuously occupied in inventing causes for the further plunder, effectual revolution, and profane desecration of Rome and its dependencies.

On this object the portentous glare of Bonaparte's eye was always fixed: he had written to the Directory, advising them to watch the Pope and to bridle Naples*; but while the uncertainty of war with the Emperor and the various projects relating to other states occupied the greatest portion of his attention, his active mind and inventive genius never rested entirely from the prosecution of schemes against Rome. In these designs he felt no impediments on the score of religion; for, as he afterward declared, "To armies like ours, to whom all religions are alike, Mahometan, Coptic, Arabic, or any others are indifferent: we have as much respect for one as for another†."

Illness of the
Pope.

Artifices and
violences of
the French.

In his eighty-third year, the Pope, Pius the Sixth, was seized with an illness portending the probability of his dissolution; and Bonaparte, on receipt of the intelligence, collected all the Polish troops under his command at Bologna, determined to push them forward to Ancona; and earnestly desired the instructions of the Directory in case of the sovereign Pontiff's decease‡. Contrary to expectation, he did not die; but he did not soon recover; and, during his illness, the seeds of revolutionary commotion were diligently sown. The French directors, and particularly Lareveilliere, from his inveterate hatred of every establishment analogous to Christianity, sought all possible occasions to create disputes; as a first essay, a requisition was made to his holiness to retract the censures pronounced against the attacks on the Catholic religion during the reign of the Constituent Assembly: he answered that his decisions being conformable to the constant discipline of the church, the canons of

* *Homme d'État*, tome v. p. 56.

† Dispatch of Bonaparte to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, 15th September 1797; *Cœuvres*, tome ii. p. 19.

‡ Dispatches, 19th, 20th, and 26th May; *Cœuvres*, tome i. pp. 395, 399, 412.

the councils, and the opinions of the holy fathers, not even the sight of the scaffold should induce him to retract. Joseph Bonaparte, the general's elder brother, was employed as ambassador to Rome. At that period, the Pope, sensible that some military defence would be necessary, and having no competent officers of his own, entrusted the command of his feeble body of troops to the Austrian general Provera. Joseph was instructed by his brother to require, not only that Provera should not be so employed, but that, within four and twenty hours, he should be expelled from the city. If the Pope died, the ambassador was to do all in his power to prevent the election of another, and to bring about a revolution*.

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September 29.

Addicted rather to voluptuous enjoyments than ambitious pursuits, Joseph Bonaparte might probably have fallen short of the instructions he received ; but his adjuncts, Generals Sherlock and Duphot, rallied around them all the favourers of republicanism, and, to persuade the people to what they called liberty, inflammatory speeches and writings were daily vented in Rome. All persons confined for treason and sedition, or, as the ambassador gently termed it, for political opinions, were liberated : his palace became their constant rendezvous ; and he appeared as the patron of a public fête, at which all the vagabonds and desperadoes in Rome were collected, called the Feast of Liberty. These men began a revolutionary process by erecting poles surmounted with red caps, and dancing round them at midnight, and by forming false patrols to elude the police and throw the city into confusion. In the afternoon of Innocents'-day, which they had fixed on for the completion of their project, a large party assembled in the street opposite the ambassador's residence, where a Frenchman delivered to them national cockades, and money to be expended in liquor. Animated by incendiary discourses, and se-

Revolution
planned.

December 28.

Conflict.

* Œuvres, tome ii. p. 56. The whole letter merits an attentive perusal. The instructions contained in it were fully sanctioned by the Directory, who declared that advantage ought to be taken of the opportunity to establish a representative government in Rome, and to deliver Europe from the Papal supremacy.

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1797.

Duphot killed.

Revolution
effected.Conduct and
treatment of
the Pope.1798.
January and
February.

cure, as they thought, of protection from the ambassador, the mob seized two guard-houses and attacked the Ponte Sesto, where they were repulsed by the military, and pursued to the ambassador's hotel, to which they retired for shelter. Joseph Bonaparte and a few of his friends rushed among the mob with drawn swords; a great tumult and some firing ensued, in which a few persons lost their lives, including General Duphot. On the ensuing morning, Joseph Bonaparte quitted Rome, obstinately deaf to all propositions of explanation or apology. The Papal government ineffectually offered every kind of acknowledgment and atonement, and tendered unconditional submission; Berthier was ordered to revolutionize Rome, and give up the country to pillage.

Pius the Sixth was venerable from his age and appearance, and from his eloquence and immaculate character universally beloved and respected, even among those who were most adverse to the pontifical establishment. He knew his own inability to oppose armed resistance; miserable experience had taught him how little he had to expect from the generosity or forbearance of his oppressors; he, therefore, sought the protection of Heaven, by prayers and ceremonies consistent with the forms of his religion. By his direction, Prince Belmonte, the Neapolitan minister, waited on Berthier to learn his precise intentions. To make conquest easy and plunder secure, the French general did not hesitate to assure him that his government sought only the punishment of those who were accessory to the death of Duphot; the Pope might rest assured of absolute safety; the existing government, the Catholic religion, and all property, public as well as private, should be respected, and he would not even enter the city. To impress greater confidence, he delivered those declarations in writing, requiring at the same time that the Pope should issue an edict to tranquillize the people and prevent bloodshed, and that nothing should be removed from the museums, the libraries, or the picture galleries. Relying on these deceptive promises, the

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10th.

February 15.

Pope removed no part of his property, nor took any measure for his personal safety, but published an edict exhorting all his people to tranquillity, and forbidding them even to talk on their affairs in such a manner as to give offence to the French. Berthier, advancing by forced marches, summoned the castle of Saint Angelo, allowing only four hours for its evacuation by the Papal troops; the convicts were set at liberty; the gates of the city secured by the French; the Pope, all the cardinals except three, and the whole people of Rome, were made prisoners at discretion. Shortly afterward, Berthier made his triumphal entry, and a tree of liberty being planted on the capitol, he pronounced a puerile address to the shades of Cato, Pompey, Brutus, Cicero, and Hortensius, which concluded by assuring the Romans that they were about to resume their ancient grandeur and the virtues of their progenitors; they were declared a free and independent republic, under the special protection of the French army; and every temporal authority emanating from the Pope was suppressed, nor was he any longer to exercise any function.

At this time, the deposed Pontiff had exercised, during twenty-three years, in a blameless manner, the sovereignty confided to him, never issuing edicts of bigotry or authorizing acts of persecution; mild toward his own subjects, and receiving strangers, without distinction of religion, with munificence and hospitality. As a refinement in the art of insult, the day selected for planting the tree of liberty and deposing him was the anniversary of his accession; and while he was, according to custom, celebrating divine service in the Sistine Chapel, and receiving the congratulations of the cardinals, Haller, the French Commissary-General, and Cervoni, a deserter from the Sardinian army, made a general in that of France, abruptly rushed in, announced the termination of his authority, and offered him a national cockade, which he rejected with dignity. They compelled the cardinals to perform a grand mass and *Te Deum*, to thank God for these deplored events; and public preachers were em-

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1798.

20 to 25.

Rapacity of the
French.

ployed to persuade the people that they were bound to submit to whatever form of government it had pleased Providence to set over them. In the midst of these oppressions, the Pope persevered in a tranquil course of dignified suffering. He refused to renounce his temporal authority, or to publish an edict for ascertaining and confiscating the property of foreigners at war with France. They demanded from him an account of the treasury of Loretto, which they themselves had removed before the peace of Tolentino, not sparing even his own tiara. They seized on his palace as barracks, confined him to his own rooms, confiscated all his effects, and he was at length removed from Rome to Sienna, where he was received with consolatory sympathy by the Augustine monks, and lodged in their convent*.

When in supreme and undisputed dominion of the country they pretended to have liberated, the French put no bounds to their predatory and destructive propensities. Every species of property, public and private, was alike the object of plunder; and, for the sake of immediate gain, articles in themselves inestimable; paintings, tapestries, every thing that could be turned into money, from the most costly ornaments down to the meanest utensil of the kitchen, was taken and sold for a base price; the plunderers seized every thing, except the al-fresco paintings which could not be removed, and even burned the sacerdotal vestments and the ornaments of shrines, to secure the portions of precious metals contained in the embroidery. Forced loans, and the issue of assignats down to the lowest

* The remaining history of Pius the Sixth exhibits only a continuation of meanness and unprofitable cruelty in his persecutors. The Executive Directory, in their message to the councils announcing the late events (6th March), not only descanted on the supposed offences committed by Rome against France, but, in the favourite style of Lareveilliere, declaimed against the pontifical throne, and recapitulated the crimes of numerous Popes, which the unoffending Pius the Sixth was doomed to expiate. He was removed, according to the caprice or policy of his persecutors, at all hours in the night and day, to many cities in Italy, where he was exhibited in chains, and at length confined in a fortress at the top of the Alps, where, under the old French government, it was sometimes customary to send regiments by way of punishment. In the course of the ensuing year, it was deemed necessary to remove him to Valence, where he terminated his days amid the horrors of neglect and insult, and all marks of respect at his funeral were prohibited.

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denomination of money, helped to complete the pecuniary ruin of the country, until it was found necessary to supply a sort of circulating medium by melting down into money bronze statues, church bells, or whatever else would supply a material.

Wanton
destruction.

Such were the efforts made to secure profitable plunder; but the progress of envious or wanton destruction was not less strongly marked. An extraordinary, but not solitary, instance occurred in the ruin of Villa Albani, a place which, for situation, elegance, erudition of antiquity, and exquisite works of art, was without a rival. The palace was nearly razed to the ground, and its villa rendered a scene of desolation. Every statue, every bust, every column, every chimney-piece, every piece of marble that served for ornament or use, was torn from its situation, and either sent to Paris, or made the perquisite of agents employed by the Directory: even the shrubs in the gardens were rooted up and sold. In contempt of the promise to respect religion, every monastic and charitable establishment was suppressed, and its revenues sequestered; institutions for learning were plundered without reserve; and the printing presses being sent into France, the professors, students, and printers, were compelled to attend Bonaparte in a projected expedition. The bitterness of inhuman insult, and the ferocity of anti-religious bigotry, were conspicuous in all these proceedings. The cardinals were lodged in a house destined to the reception of penitent prostitutes; and princes and nobles were compelled to serve as privates, in corps commanded by the lowest and basest of their late dependents. As a compensation for the loss of liberty, religion, and property, the French conferred on the people a federation, a constitution, and a Jacobin club. The first was a mixture of ostentation, profaneness, and pedantry; the constitution, a mere repetition of that absurd abstract of the inefficient code of France which had been given to the people of Venice; and the club shewed such a rapid proficiency in the principles of its great parent at Paris, that sons began to talk of denouncing their

March 20.

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parents; noyades were recommended, and general resolutions were passed against all members of the priesthood. Thus was the ancient and famous city of Rome despoiled of wealth, of almost all the moveable treasures of art, of its elected prince, of its nobility, of religion, morals, respectability, and prosperity. The dejection of degraded worth, or the ferocity of upstart insolence, appeared in all quarters; industry languished, crimes abounded, and public credit was utterly ruined*.

However these events might collaterally affect her interests, Great Britain could hardly be said to have any share in guiding or averting them. By withdrawing her fleet from the Mediterranean, whether wisely or not, she had foregone all power of aiding or influencing the proceedings of the Italian states, of effecting any diversion in favour of Rome, or of protecting or countenancing those measures which the court of Naples was disposed to adopt in resisting the encroachments of France: the tyranny, rapacity, and perfidy, which have been so much displayed, were important admonitions to those who might be sufficiently infatuated to expect from French interference in the affairs of this country, any thing better than could be derived from ferocious antipathy and unsparing cupidity.

Events in the
West Indies.

In the West Indies and Canada, some events occurred which are merely to be mentioned. Victor Hugues had directed an attack on Auguilla, a small, defenceless island, with instructions for general plunder and indiscriminate murder. Three hundred picked men had made dreadful progress in the execution of these commands; but a party from St. Kitt's, under Captain Barton, having arrived, the French force was for the most part captured or destroyed, and nothing remained to them from this barbarous expedition, but the ignominy of their conduct and the disgrace of their

* These facts are detailed in Duppa's *Brief Account of the Overthrow of the Papal Government*; *Homme d'État*, tome v. p. 173 et seqq.; Lacrételle, tome xi. p. 145 to 162, in which is contained an affecting account of the treatment of the Pope until his death; also *Captivité et Mort de Pie VI*, par le General De Merck.

failure. Jamaica, St. Vincent's, and Grenada, no longer alarmed by Maroons or Carribs, remained in a state of tranquillity; and an attempt treacherously to betray Dominica into the hands of Victor Hugues was frustrated by the detection and execution of a man named La Course, who had been employed to manage the execution of the plot*.

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1798.

Saint Domingo, the cause of so much expense and so great loss of lives, presented a view daily more distressing. The British troops, diminished by disease and foiled in attempts at conquest, suffered additional annoyance from the enterprises of an enemy daily becoming more expert in the art of war, and more regular in their system of government. Two negro generals, Rigaud and Toussaint L'Ouverture distinguished themselves on the side of the enemy, while a proposal, submitted to Jamaica, Barbadoes, and other islands, to raise five black regiments to protect our colonies, should the example of Saint Domingo or the exertions of the enemy require such assistance, was rejected both by the legislative bodies and popular assemblies, as obviously leading to the greatest possible evils. In these unhappy circumstances, the command of the army was given to General Simcoe; but his experience, bravery, and prudence, could not reanimate a desperate cause, or give effect to measures which were not supported by an adequate force. Finding his attempts unavailing, and wearied with a contest in which he was doomed to witness only misfortune and disappointment, the general quitted the command and returned to England. The remaining history of this unfortunate expedition may be briefly narrated. General Simcoe was succeeded alternately by Generals Whyte, Nesbit, and Maitland. Every effort to retain possession having been tried in vain, the last-mentioned general, by a treaty with Toussaint, surrendered all that could be called his possession in the island, which, on the black troops in the British service being also given up, was recognized as a neutral power, with some commercial stipulations reserved for England.

St. Domingo.

1797.
March.

August.

1798.
August.

* Annual Register, vol. xxxix. p. 272.

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1798.

Whether the efforts to acquire this inestimable possession were wisely commenced or not, the cost and havock, the constant experience of growing resistance, and the removal of hopes of final success, might have dictated a more early abandonment*.

Canada.

Hoping to derive advantage from the identity of language and manners, and from other circumstances connected with the state of Canada, the French planned a scheme for revolutionizing that country. Adet, their envoy at Philadelphia, employed emissaries who succeeded in raising some commotions, and promised assistance from France, and a powerful aid from the bordering provinces of the United States ; but David Maclean, their principal agent, having been detected, tried, and executed, the project failed, and tranquillity was restored.

* Annual Register, vol. xxxix. p. 276 ; Raynsford's History of Saint Domingo, p. 201 et seqq.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR.

1797—1798.

Marriage of the Princess Royal.—Parliamentary provision.—

Death of Mr. Burke.—Opening of Parliament.—Secession of opposition.—Addresses—how opposed.—Earl Fitzwilliam.

Lord Lansdowne.—Lord Mulgrave.—House of Commons.

Address on the negotiation.—Sir John Sinclair's amendment.—Earl Temple.—Mr. Pitt.—Amendment withdrawn.

Procession to St. Paul's.—Thanks and rewards to Lord Duncan—and Lord St. Vincent.—Report of a Committee

on the Bank.—Bill for continuing restriction.—Opposed by

Mr. Hobhouse—and others.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Tierney.—

Army estimates.—Proposal for limited enlistments.—Bud-

get.—The assessed taxes trebled.—Opposed.—Second read-

ing of the bill.—Mr. Pitt.—Motion for the third reading.

House of Lords.—Suggestion of Mr. Addington.—Volun-

tary subscriptions.—Redemption of the land-tax.—Lord

Sheffield.—Further opposition.—House of Lords.—Second

budget.—Proposed tax on fees and salaries.—Mr. Tierney's

motion respecting Mr. Dundas.—Mr. Dundas.—Mr. Tierney

moves an address.—The Duke of Bedford's motion.—Lord

Holland.—Marquis of Lansdowne.—Lord Borringdon.—

The Earl of Romney.—Motion negatived.—Conduct of

the Seceders.—Tavern dinners.—Toast given by the Duke

of Norfolk.—His dismissal from office.—Mr. Fox excluded

from the Privy Council.—Observations.—Prosecutions.—

A meeting dispersed.—Infidel publications.—Prosecution

of a publisher.—Newspapers.—Proceedings against the

Morning Chronicle.—Bill for regulating newspapers.—Mr.

Sheridan.—Mr. Tierney.—Mr. Jekyll.—Habeas Corpus

suspension and Alien Act revived.—French preparations

for invasion.—Loan proposed.—Seizure of British merchandizes.—Prevailing spirit in England.—Message to Parliament.—Defence bill.—Message on traitorous correspondence.—Patriotic speech of Mr. Sheridan.—Mr. Pitt.—Bill for manning the navy.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Tierney. Mr. Pitt.—The Speaker interferes.—Mr. Pitt's answer. Duel.—End of the session.

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1797.

May 18.
Marriage of the
Princess Royal

3.
Parliamentary
provision.

July 9.
Death of
Mr. Burke.

BEFORE the close of the late session of Parliament, a marriage was celebrated between Frederick William, hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg Stutgard, and Charlotte Augusta Matilda, the eldest daughter of his Majesty*. Before the arrival of the Prince, the approaching event was communicated to Parliament; and, in answer to his Majesty's message, the House of Commons expressed their satisfaction at this alliance with a Protestant prince so considerable in rank and station; they voted £80,000, which purchased £165,000 three per cents, vested in the names of trustees appointed by Parliament. The Princess left the country amid the blessings and tears of all who knew her.

Worn with toil, anxiety, and grief, rather than summoned by age, Mr. Burke expired in the course of the summer, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. The space filled during so many years in the political and literary world by this eminent man, renders it impossible, in a brief summary, to define his character; especially as there is no portion of his public life on which opinions diametrically opposite are not advanced with equal warmth, and supported with equal strength. Taking four great leading points—the American war, the King's illness, the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, and the French revolution,—it will be found that his opponents are at least as numerous and as able as his supporters. His eloquence, enriched with all that knowledge, and adorned with all that fancy, can supply, was rather calculated to conquer than to persuade; its very copiousness diminished its effect; and much of his argument was often heard with tan-

* Annual Register, vol. xxxix. p. 162*.

guor and indifference, because the points which he was labouring to prove had already been established, and many of the illustrations already exhausted : but when, after judicious retrenchments, they were given forth as pamphlets, the treasures of wisdom, the felicities of wit, the beauties of arrangement, and the force of deduction, were conspicuous, and, where they did not produce conviction, never failed to excite admiration. If, in his public conflicts, passion carried him, as it often did, beyond the bounds of acknowledged propriety, it was to sincere feeling alone that his error could be imputed : in him nothing was simulated or occasional ; he thought, felt, and spoke, from a full conviction that his assertions were founded on truth, and his deductions on reason. His private life was unstained with vice or impropriety. As a husband, father, or friend, his conduct was exemplary. To those about him, he displayed that cheering kindness which elates the heart and inspires confidence and affection ; while, toward those from whom he received favours, his attachment was replete with gratitude, and never deficient in dignity. In his speeches, where a hostile feeling was to be expressed, the torrent of his vituperation burst all the bounds of regulated society ; and his enmities, never founded on personal, but on public grounds, were irreconcilable. Mr. Fox, who professed a different temper of mind*, when informed of the probability of Mr. Burke's speedy decease, attempted to renew the feelings which had formerly subsisted between them, and, acting on the principle which he advocated in the great concerns of the nation, would not suffer a point of etiquette to prevent the opening of a treaty. He wrote a letter of inquiry, which might have led to an oblivion of hostile feelings, and, as Mr. Burke was no longer in public life, to a renewal of personal civilities ; but the answer, he received from Mrs. Burke, by direction of the expiring statesman, said that it had cost him the most heart-felt pain to obey the stern voice of duty in rending asunder a long friendship ; but he deemed the

* Vol. iii. p. 461.

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CIV.

1797.

sacrifice necessary: his principles remained the same; and, in whatever of life remained to him, he conceived that he must live for others and not for himself. He was convinced that the principles he had endeavoured to maintain were necessary to the welfare and dignity of his country, and that they could be enforced only by the general persuasion of his sincerity. His funeral was graced with all the honourable demonstrations from the great and the good that private virtue and eminent public services can merit*.

November 2.
Opening of
Parliament.

In opening the session of Parliament, the King mentioned with regret the failure of his efforts to effect the restoration of peace, attributing the long delay and final rupture of the negotiation to the evasive conduct, the unwarrantable pretensions, and the inordinate ambition of the enemy, and above all, to their inveterate animosity against these kingdoms. He spoke with confidence of the zeal, magnanimity, and courage of his people, with satisfaction of the productive state of national industry and commerce, and with deserved eulogy of the valour of his troops, and particularly the success of his navy under Admiral Duncan. His Majesty also recommended the enforcement of a due reverence and obedience to the laws, by promptly repressing every attempt to disturb tranquillity, and maintaining inviolate our happy constitution.

Secession of
opposition.

To the surprise of some, and the dissatisfaction of many, the opposition benches in both houses were not occupied as usual, the principal leaders having adopted the puerile and useless measure of secession. In excuse for this desertion of their duties in the support of what they professed to consider the real interests of their country, they alleged the inutility of further resistance to the overwhelming majorities by which the propositions of the ministry had been carried; and the imputation of revolutionary principles which was unsparingly attached to such members as did not coin-

* For the account of Mr. Burke's last days, and general observations on his character, see Bissett's Life, p. 573 to the end; and Prior's Memoirs, vol. ii. chapters 6, 7, and 8.

cide with the policy of the administration*. This flimsy covering for wounded pride and impatient ambition, far from blinding the public, did not conceal the deformity of the measure, even from the most determined adherents of the party. The resolution was not rigidly adhered to, but still sufficiently to create great dissatisfaction†.

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1797.

In both Houses, the opposition to the addresses was feeble: several opinions were advanced and views pointed out, separate from each other, and shewing the necessity of a powerful leader to constitute an efficient party. Perfectly consistent in maintaining the principles he had always avowed, Earl Fitzwilliam lamented that any attempt at a negotiation had ever been made with a power, constituted as was the French republic: it was not only nugatory, but productive of increased difficulty and danger. He regretted that his Majesty had been advised to declare the French republic capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity, conscious as he was that a restored monarchy alone could render its existence compatible with the safety of other European powers. He adverted to the abject slavery in which those states were plunged who had listened to their professions, persuasions, and specious promises of liberty and equality; and supported his argument by a statement of their conduct in every instance, from Avignon to Venice and Genoa, exhibiting one constant scene of injustice and galling tyranny. From what uncultivated wild, in the most barbarous country, did ever such swarms of such banditti issue as from the cultivated empire of France, to overspread surround-

Addresses,
how opposed.

Earl
Fitzwilliam.

* Annual Register, vol. xl. p. 151.

† See Letter from Major Cartwright to the Rev. C. Wyvill, dated the 10th of December, and from Capel Lofft to the same, 20th December 1797. Political Papers of the Rev. C. Wyvill, vol. v. pp. 376, 386. With characteristic vanity, the first of these writers, after a correspondence with Mr. Fox on the subject, says, "This secession is to me a grievous mortification. I have noticed Mr. Fox's apology, and think he had not well considered the measure. There is much argument in what he says; but it is the argument of one who has not gone to the bottom of the subject. With his strength of constitution, and his eloquence, I think I could, from the theatre of St Stephen's, make the whole people my willing auditory, and mould them in the cause of liberty to my wish."

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ing kingdoms with madness and guilt? His Majesty had formerly said that we fought for order, morality, and religion; their value was undiminished, and it merited deep and mature consideration whether it became a great and free people to exchange order, morality, and religion, for confusion, mutual depredation, and atheism. It was now as much as ever his steadfast opinion that, consistently with our national dignity, our constitution, the love we owed to our country, our children, and our posterity, we could not agree to conditions of peace and amity with France, until the old monarchy was replaced, and an hereditary sovereign reinstated on the throne of his ancestors. He moved, therefore, the omission of the words which implied an approbation of the steps taken to restore peace with the French government.

Lord
Lansdowne.

Among other statements, the noble Earl strenuously maintained that this country was fully able to persevere in the contest with France without any ally, and displayed a sanguine exultation in our commercial and financial prosperity; but the Marquis of Lansdowne, while he opposed the address, strongly controverted these opinions. He treated the want of allies as a misfortune of the first importance. If this were true, what were we to do when the French had made a Jacobin of the Emperor? We could not hope to recover the King of Prussia as an ally. He also might become a Jacobin. "Our sailors, indeed," he said, "have maintained the glory of our maritime empire; but what can our great and glorious naval exploits effect? They make us masters of the sea, indeed; but where shall we land? We have the seas of Europe, and France has its ports: commerce requires not only that the seas be open, but the markets. We have ships that traverse and command the ocean; the French have armies that traverse and command the shores. We can ship our manufactures; but where shall we land or expose them to sale? What sea is there between Paris and Hamburgh, or Paris and Hanover, or Paris and Lisbon?" He suggested, as the only means which

could correct the folly of our system, check the fatality of our career, and afford us one chance of safety, a change of ministers.

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1797.

In the course of his speech, the Marquis lamented that, from the absence of the opposition peers, he should stand alone in the debate: Lord Mulgrave said, he hoped and believed that no individual, either within or without those doors, would be found to concur in the opinions he had expressed.

Lord
Mulgrave.

Mr. Bryan Edwards opposed the address in the House of Commons, without moving an amendment; his speech consisted principally of an eulogy on Mr. Fox. If the advice of him, whose transcendent talents were his smallest praise, had been attended to, they should not at this day have had to mourn over the calamities of the country. Several other members joined in lamentations over past measures, and prognostics of coming misfortunes. As if in generous forbearance, the principal ministerial leaders abstained from mixing in the debate. The addresses were voted without division; but Earl Fitzwilliam recorded his opinions in a long protest.

House of
Commons.

The papers relating to the late negotiations for peace having been presented to both Houses, Lord Grenville prefaced a motion for an address, with a judicious speech; the House was unanimous in approving the motion; not a voice of objection was raised; and after a short speech from the Earl of Darnley, who seconded the motion, it remained only to give to the address the utmost possible solemnity, by communicating it to the other House at a conference.

Address on the
negotiation.
Nov. 3.
8.

In the House of Commons, Sir John Sinclair said that his Majesty's declaration was full of rash and violent invective, its object being to establish between the two countries inveterate and lasting animosities; and moved an amendment deploring the continuance of war, trusting that both nations would see the wisdom and policy of speedily renewing a negotiation; and promising, in case of failure, every exertion that circumstances might render necessary.

House of
Commons.
10.
Sir John
Sinclair's
amendment.

Earl Temple, addressing the House for the first

Earl Temple.

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time, began a speech, in opposition to the amendment, with a spirited animadversion on the conduct of the seceders. "I should have hoped," he said, "that on an occasion like the present, on a subject involving the dearest interests of their country, those gentlemen would for a moment have forgotten that disgust which they say drove them from the house. I should have hoped that for once they would have done their duty, in spite of the laughter of which they professed to stand so much in dread. Their country has little, their constituents still less, to thank them for, when they see their interests deserted and themselves insulted by a mockery of a representation." He had always looked with terror to the event of the negotiation, seeing much more to dread in the probable event of peace than in the continuance of war. He expatiated on the insincerity of the Directory in their pretended desire of peace; the antipathy to England, which was at all times the watchword of every party; the cry of the armies, of the Directory, of the councils, and of the people was still, "*Delenda est Carthago*;" it was used by all classes and on every occasion. To a strenuous reprobation of the collecting of half a million of men on the coast, under the name of an army of England, his lordship joined many contemptuous observations on the laying up of the fleet, asking whether cork-jackets or air balloons were to be used as substitutes. After many forcible observations on the bad faith and ambition of the enemy, their delusive promises of liberty to other nations, while they possessed no portion of it themselves, he concluded by declaring that the mover of the amendment, asserting everything, had proved nothing; and that if it could pass, the House and the country would be reduced to an unprecedented state of degradation.

Mr. Pitt.

In an able and luminous speech, Mr. Pitt analyzed the motives for the proposed amendment, and reviewed the whole conduct of the French government as disclosed in the papers before the House. The exposure of the duplicity with which the views of unmeasured

ambition and inextinguishable hatred were pursued by France, and the fallacy of the assertions on which Sir John Sinclair had founded his amendment was so fully and irresistibly disclosed, that Mr. Tyrwhitt, Dr. Laurence, Mr. Wilberforce, and other members, expressed their wish that he should withdraw it. He was inclined to follow their advice; but, Mr. Bryan Edwards, by whom it was seconded, not being present, he was obliged, by the forms of the House, to apply for leave, which was readily granted, and the address unanimously carried.

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Amendment
withdrawn.

As a public demonstration of gratitude to Almighty God for the successes at sea which enabled this country so effectually to withstand the overgrown power of France on the Continent, the King and Queen, the royal family, the great officers of state, the two Houses of Parliament, and the eminent commanders in the British service formed a solemn procession to the cathedral of St. Paul, where a service of commemoration and thanksgiving was performed. The ceremony produced a strong and desirable effect on the people, although some misguided or hired vagrants disgraced the scene by insulting Mr. Pitt.

December 19.
Procession to
St. Paul's.

The thanks which had been voted to Lord Duncan had previously been delivered to him by the Chancellor, and acknowledged in a manner becoming so brave a man on such an occasion. Both the speeches were, on motion by the Duke of Clarence, entered on the Journals. A more solid and not less merited mark of public gratitude ensued, when, in consequence of a message from the King, an annuity of £2000 was settled on him, and on the two next succeeding heirs male of his body to whom his title should descend; and, in consequence of a similar message, a similar gratuity was conferred on Earl St. Vincent.

Thanks and
rewards to
Lord Duncan,

November 8.

1798.
February 9.

and Lord St.
Vincent.

At an early period of the session, a secret committee of fifteen members was appointed to enquire into the expediency of continuing the law restricting the Bank from making payments in cash. They speedily returned a report founded on an ample investigation; and on a resolution of the Court of Directors,

1797.
November 15.
Report of a
committee on
the Bank.

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in which they stated that although the affairs of the Bank, both with respect to the general balance of its accounts and its capacity of making payments in specie, were in such a position that it might safely resume its accustomed functions, yet it would be expedient to continue the subsisting restriction for such time and under such limitations as Parliament might deem fit.

Bill for con-
tinuing restric-
tion.Opposed by
Mr. Hobhouse

and others.

Mr. Pitt.

Without difficulty, Mr. Pitt obtained leave to bring in a bill for continuing the restriction during the war; but on the motion for going into a committee, an opposition was commenced by Mr. Hobhouse, who expressed doubts of the solvent condition of the Bank, and argued that if they were so prosperous, they had been guilty of gross misconduct, in not having availed themselves of the power given by Parliament to make partial payments in July; and he objected to the continuance of the restriction during the whole period of the war. Mr. Allardice and Mr. Nicholls deprecated the dependence of government on the Bank, or the too close connexion between them.

On Mr. Hobhouse's objection, Mr. Pitt remarked, that, in the very next sentence of the report to that which he had so industriously selected, appeared a statement that the Bank had now five times more bullion than last year. The avowal made by the enemy of a design to ruin our public credit was the motive for an additional term of restriction; and it was to be remembered that no injury, nor even inconvenience, had been as yet sustained.

Mr. Tierney.

Mr. Tierney declared that he could not see why the Bank should be governed by a separate and peculiar rule of moral conduct, or how that which in individuals would be held fraudulent, should in their case be considered just and salutary. If ministers could carry the same measure on grounds so totally different as those now advanced from those of last year, what was it but to say that, whether the course of exchange were unfavourable or favourable, gold going rapidly out of the country or coming rapidly in; whether there were a drain on the Bank or a vast influx of bullion into it, the House must sanction the Bank in the proposed

measure, and justify them in saying to the public, "We owe you money, and here we have money in abundance, but will not pay you." He made many more observations on the extraordinary conduct of the governor and company of the Bank in writing on their promissory notes "payable on demand," while they were determined to refuse that payment; on their desertion of that spirit which distinguished their forefathers, and rendered some of them, though but traders, not less illustrious than the first statesmen; and their continuing under the goading reflection, that, before the censuring eye of all Europe, they were praying Parliament to continue them unnecessarily in a state of bankruptcy. That the enemy would aim a blow at our credit and finances was obvious; for all modern wars were made on resources rather than blood; but in order to leave to the enemy no credit to attack, the ministers would destroy it themselves. This precious plan first originated in the diabolical but fertile mind of that monster Robespierre. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer wished to have the notes of the Bank circulated, he must adopt the vigour with the policy of Robespierre, and make them a legal tender in all cases, or the Bank would be blown upon.

As Mr. Tierney had declared that he was determined to give his negative to every act of the present administration, and had a general retainer for the whole session*, no answer to this speech was thought necessary; but, without a division, the House formed itself into a committee; and the bill, unopposed, was reported and passed.

When the secretary at war presented the army estimates, General Fitzpatrick suggested, that, instead of being enlisted for life, soldiers should enter for a limited period. Twenty years ago, Colonel Barré had proposed that the period of service should be six years: had that bill passed, the nation would now have felt additional security from the knowledge that there was spread over the country a large body of men accus-

Army estimates.
November 20.
Proposal for limited enlistments.

* Nov. 7, Debates, vol. xxxiii. p. 963.

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22.
Budget.

tomed to the use of arms. The proposition was opposed by Mr. Windham, and failed.

In a committee of ways and means, the Chancellor of the Exchequer produced the statement of exigencies and means of supply, commonly called the budget, in which he calculated that, after the application of all the existing resources, there would still remain a want of twenty-five millions and a half. On the accustomed modes of taxation little discussion arose; but one topic engaged the attention of both Houses, and for many days produced animated, not to say violent, debates. Mr. Pitt announced that his great object was to guard against the accumulation of the funded debt, by a general tax which should raise within the year seven millions, a sum far exceeding any which had been similarly required at any former period. He proposed to accomplish this end by a great increase of the assessed taxes, and he adverted to the arrangements he had planned for diffusing the levy as extensively as possible, and regulating it fairly and equally, without a rigid investigation of property which the customs, and manners, and the pursuits of the people would render odious and vexatious. He also purposed to exclude from the operation of the tax, those who were least able to contribute, and by special modifications to mitigate its pressure on some classes of the community, and pointed out the means which would be employed to accelerate, rather than retard, the operation of the sinking fund. The resolution was agreed to. The plan, when fully disclosed, consisted in augmenting the assessed taxes levied in the last year to three times, and progressively to four times the amount, with deductions and diminutions proportioned to the ability of the subject, as shewn by the rate of his assessment.

December 4.
The assessed
taxes trebled.

Opposed.

Sir William Pulteney urged against the first resolution many obvious and some not quite so palpable objections. Several other members followed, and their arguments, not confined to the specific measure, embraced all the topics of daily censure; the interference of peers at elections, the reform of parliament, the

justice of the war, and the certainty of obtaining peace if ministers were dismissed. The resolutions were carried by an unusually great majority*.

On the motion for a second reading, Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan, at the request of their constituents, broke through their self-imposed law of secession, and recorded their opposition. The war, it was said, was continued for the sole purpose of keeping nine worthless ministers in their places; the bill was a penalty on economy, a bounty on perjury, a libel on the public spirit, a commission of bankruptcy against the whole commercial community. It was untruly stated that the tax would not affect the poorer class of people; for as it would diminish the use of luxuries, the retrenchments of the wealthy must affect the means of subsistence of the poor. They were not taxed; but they must be starved. The ultimate operation of the bill would be to establish a fiscal inquisition in every parish, to pry into the property of individuals, to ascertain their gains, and expose the improvement or decay of their circumstances. No human being could calculate the horrors to which this measure might give rise. It was easy to talk of the theoretical blessings of our constitution; but such talking was vain, unless the people were made to feel its practical blessings. The Jacobin principles of the French Directory were spoken of; no man had made so many Jacobins as the minister; and if this measure were persevered in, the tax might be put under the management of the military; if it could not be collected, they might distrain; and when they had seized on our beds and chairs, they might, last of all, take our persons. "Contra opes primum, et post in corpora sæviri."

Mr. Pitt, in a speech of equal force and beauty, answered these arguments, and, without resorting to topics of feeling, or courting popular applause by specious generalities, or offensive personal allusions, ex-

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1797.
December 14.
Second
reading of the
bill.

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plained and supported the proposed measure. The division was greatly in his favour*.

1798.
January 3, 4.
Motion for
third reading.

On the motion for a third reading, a debate took place which lasted two nights, producing little that was new, although Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox renewed their efforts, and much classical illustration was employed. Two divisions took place, with results nearly similar†.

9.
House of
Lords.

In the House of Lords, the bill occasioned one debate on the motion for its being committed. The opposition was a renewal of the arguments used in the lower House, with some varieties arising from the particular feelings and connexions of the speakers. Lord Holland made his first display, and, in the style and effect of his argument, shewed an emulation to walk in the steps of his uncle. At one period he transgressed the limits of Parliamentary rule, so far as to be called to order by the Lord Chancellor; but he recovered his position, and, in answer to an observation of Lord Grenville, charging him with a desire to change the fundamental basis of the British constitution, said, he presumed the noble secretary spoke so highly of the constitution from the impulse of a generous maxim, "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*;" and he introduced some humorous verses by Prior:

"Thus Harlequin extoll'd his horse,
"Fit for the war, or road, or course:
"His mouth was soft, his eye was good,
"His feet as sure as ever trod:
"One fault he had; a fault indeed!
"And what was that? the horse was dead."

The division left the noble lord in a remarkably small minority‡; but he and the earl of Oxford signed a protest in six articles.

1797.
December 4.
Suggestion of
Mr. Addington.

While the bill was in a committee, Mr. Addington said he was confident that many persons of affluent fortune, sensible of the delicacy manifested in not

* 175 to 50.

† That the word "now" stand part of the motion, 202 to 75. That the bill be read a third time, 196 to 71.

‡ 73 to 6.

searching too minutely into capital, would come voluntarily forward to make such a contribution above the amount of the class of their assessment as should be equal to their real property. Such a measure having received the required Parliamentary sanction, the correctness of the speaker's anticipation was speedily demonstrated. The Bank of England contributed two hundred thousand pounds, and the City of London ten thousand. A temporary office, or hustings, being erected under the eastern piazza of the Royal Exchange, hundreds of merchants, traders, and others, eagerly crowded in to subscribe sums from one guinea to three thousand pounds; the first day produced £46,534. On the whole, this voluntary contribution amounted to two millions sterling, exclusive of three hundred thousand pounds remitted from India*.

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1797.

Voluntary
subscriptions.

1798.

February 9.

To increase the supplies, and relieve the funds, Mr. Pitt presented another plan, the outline of which had been for some time before the public; its leading object, as he stated it, was to absorb a great quantity of stock, to transfer a considerable portion of the funded to landed security, and, by the redemption of the present land-tax, to purchase stock more than equivalent to its amount. That tax would be made applicable in the same manner as at present; but the proportion of stock it would purchase would be one fifth larger; presenting at once a considerable pecuniary gain to the public, and an advantage to the individual by whom the redemption should be made. The amount of the present land-tax, about two millions, had been annually granted by Parliament for a century past, and levied at the same rate in different districts. The repartition which was originally made, had continued so long, and the sum of four shillings in the pound for so considerable a period had never been exceeded, that it would be readily acknowledged that this sum ought not to be diminished, at least until

April 2.
Redemption of
the land-tax.

* Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 440. The sum of three thousand pounds was subscribed by Messrs. Boyd, Benfield, and Company, with a promise of an annual repetition of it during the war. Mr. Robert Peel, of Bury, in Lancashire, a manufacturer and printer of calicoes, paid into the Bank ten thousand pounds, as his own voluntary contribution.

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many other burthens which weighed more heavily on the public should have been removed. He proposed, therefore, by changing the security of a part of the funded capital into landed security, to cover the two millions of existing land-tax by two millions four hundred thousand of dividends. By this measure, if the whole land-tax were to be redeemed, the public would gain four hundred thousand pounds. Equal advantages would be assured to land owners, which would render it eligible for them to redeem, and give full effect to the measure. The speech in which the minister detailed and recommended the proposed measure, beside its general power of argumentation, fully justified the opinion often expressed by his first and constant opponent on this question, that he could make a budget no less attractive than a fairy tale.

Lord Sheffield.

This opponent was Lord Sheffield, who censured the measure as the most extraordinary, the most rash, and the very worst that was ever proposed to Parliament. He objected to considering the present land-tax as fixed and perpetual. Had it been proposed that the tax in future should fall on the occupier, it would ultimately fall on the consumer, and would be paid by the land-owners, in common with the rest of the community; but he understood that, as soon as it was sold, a new land-tax was to be imposed. He deprecated such an oppression on the landed interest, at a moment when a great part of them paid six times the other usual taxes. Parliament should take care not to drive gentlemen from the country: their attention to the distresses and morals of individuals did more than the best laws could accomplish, and produced their effect even where no law could reach: the sale of the forests and crown lands, instead of a loss, would be a great national benefit, if by any means they could become private property. Sir William Pulteney and other members enforced these objections; but the division against going into a committee was very small*, and fifteen resolutions proposed by the minister were adopted.

* 13 to 105.

In its subsequent stages, the opposition of Lord Sheffield was supported by Sir John Sinclair, Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Sheridan, and many other members. Among other reasons advanced in support of it, Sir Richard Carr Glynn stated that, before the rumour of this measure, the three per cent. annuities were at forty-seven per cent.; and many experienced individuals had given their opinion, that, if some measure similar to this in effect had not been brought forward, they must have been sold to the loan contractor at forty-five. Since the introduction of this bill, the minister had bargained with the loan contractors at upwards of forty-eight per cent.—thus acquiring to the public a clear gain of more than a million of stock. On several divisions, the minister always had large majorities: the bill passed.

Several members of the upper House opposed the bill on the motion for a second reading. Lord Thurlow insisted that it was partial; its provisions being more favourably framed for the Scotch than for the English landholder. A measure which entitled every man to buy, and obliged so many to sell, was no other in effect than a requisition for the disposal of an aliquot part of every man's estate. Considering it no less necessary to tax personal than landed property, his lordship repeated a simile in a work respecting the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, where the country gentlemen were compared to sheep, who quietly suffered themselves to be shorn and re-shorn; and the moneyed men to hogs, who always made a noise and bustle if even their bristles were touched. Lord Auckland and Lord Grenville vindicated the measure, and, after a division* on this question, the bill passed without further opposition; but a protest against it was signed by the Duke of Leeds and three other peers.

While this measure was yet in progress, the Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself under the necessity of introducing, in a committee of ways and means, what was termed a second budget. In November, he said, he had estimated the exigencies at

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1798.
April 23.
May 9, 30.
Further
opposition.

House of
Lords
June 8.

12th.

April 25.
Second
budget.

* 27 to 7.

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twenty-five millions and a half; but he now found that an addition of three millions would be required. This excess had unavoidably arisen from the unforeseen preparations occasioned by the threats and formidable exertions of the enemy. An additional loan being required, Messrs. Boyd and Company, as the lowest bidders, had entitled themselves to the contract. The interest was to be provided for by duties on salt, on tea exceeding in value two shillings and sixpence per pound, and on armorial bearings, in various amounts,—namely, two guineas per annum on those who displayed them on carriages, one guinea on housekeepers who used them on plate, and half-a-guinea on persons who bore them without being included in either of the former descriptions. Not without some debates, but without any effectual resistance, all the measures were carried*.

1797.
December 8.
Proposed tax
on fees and
salaries.

In the course of discussions on the bill respecting the assessed taxes, Mr. Nicholls made an attempt at popularity, by moving for an application of all salaries, fees, and perquisites of offices under the crown, to the use of the war; but his motion was at first so unintelligible, through the wording of an exception relating to the sum of £2000 per annum, that, amidst the laughter of the whole House, he was obliged to amend: its injustice and futility were afterward so fully displayed by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Windham, that, although supported by Mr. Tierney, he was content to withdraw it.

November 7.
Mr. Tierney's
motion respecting
Mr. Dundas.

At an early period of the session, Mr. Tierney revived a question which had long before received its answer in the house. He considered the holding of a seat by Mr. Dundas a most indecent, unlawful, and offensive proceeding. It was not required for the public service, as four additional clerks could have performed all the duties which were now committed to a large and costly establishment, which raised the annual expense from £29,000 to £40,000. The em-

* These facts and debates in the House of Lords on the redemption of the land-tax are not mentioned in the Parliamentary History. I have therefore derived them principally from the Annual Register, vol. xl. p. 233 to 237.

ployment of four additional clerks would not answer the purpose of ministers, whose only object was an increase of the patronage of the crown. But even if the necessity were proved, under the law it was impossible that Mr. Dundas could retain his seat. It might, perhaps, be said that this was only a new division of the secretary's office, that the right honourable gentleman, being a commoner, possessed the office, and, by dividing and giving one half to a peer, he had not forfeited his seat; as if the master of the mint were to give generally the office to a peer, and reserve to himself, being a commoner, only the coining of six-pences. If Mr. Dundas wanted a new arrangement, he might look to his friend Mr. Windham, who was at the head of an establishment of no less than £42,000 a year, and to divide with him, rather than lay new exactions on the public. Having expressed, in coarse terms, his indignation at the laughter which this absurd proposition occasioned, he moved two resolutions, asserting the creation of an office of secretary of state for the war department in 1794, and that Mr. Dundas, by accepting it, was rendered incapable of sitting in Parliament.

On the first of these resolutions being proposed, the right honourable Secretary entered into an accurate statement of the real circumstances of the case. In 1791, he was appointed secretary of state for the home department, at a period when its duties comprehended the internal correspondence of the country, with Ireland, the colonies, and, in general, every thing relative to the executive administration. At the commencement of the war, the military correspondence was likewise conducted by this department, and there it continued until the increase of business arising out of the war, the new and strange scenes acted in various parts of the country, the frantic and dangerous designs to disturb the public tranquillity and to overthrow our happy constitution, called for additional industry and vigilance. When, in 1791, he received the seals of the home department, he became at the same time custodier of those which had belonged to Lord George

Mr. Dundas.

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Germaine. When a new arrangement took place, he carried those seals to his Majesty, who delivered them to the Duke of Portland, but ordered him to continue the military correspondence, and to conduct the business of secretary of state, so far as related to this object. He received no new patent for the office, nor new salary. In no respect were his emoluments either increased or diminished. After some further observations, he withdrew.

Mr. Tierney endeavoured to improve his case by a supplementary speech, which drew on him some severe observations from Mr. Pitt: his effort, on a division, displayed a miserable defeat*.

December 15.
Mr. Tierney
moves an
address.

Soon afterward, Mr. Tierney remodelled his objections into an address to the King, representing that by the new arrangements the crown acquired the distribution of new salaries to the annual amount of £9400, and eighteen places; that, by certain cessions made by Lord Grenville and Mr. Dundas, the civil list gained £4000 per annum; and the influence of the crown had been largely and unnecessarily increased. The motion found no supporter. Mr. Dundas was heard in explanation; Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Abbott, made a few observations, and it was negatived without a division.

1798.
March 22.
The Duke of
Bedford's
motion.

The Duke of Bedford made a more direct and manly attack on ministers, by moving an address to his Majesty, expressing a hope that he would see the urgent and indispensable necessity of employing other persons, and adopting other councils.

His Grace introduced his motion by a speech, in which he maintained that, ministers having been uniformly supported by the implicit confidence and wholly uncontrolled by the interference of the House, had, nevertheless, reduced the country to its present calamitous state by their misconduct and incapacity; and, consequently, it could not entertain a hope of rescue from present difficulties by the continuance of any efforts they might attempt. He restated the opinions of his party respecting the origin and causes of the war,

* 139 to 8.

the increase of the national debt, and the defection of allies, adding observations on the state of Ireland. He repelled with indignation the base aspersions lavished on all who ventured to dissent from the measures of ministers: they had been charged with being hostile to the constitution; it was true that they held a reform in Parliament to be necessary; without it, the country could never be placed on a good footing; and they stood pledged to take no share in any administration in which that was not a leading object. With equal disdain, he repelled the insinuation that he was not averse to the success of the French in their designs against this country. Were the French to land, where could they find any supporters, but among those mean sycophants of power who readily and servilely followed every change, who had alternately been the creatures of every one in authority, and whose loyalty was

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1798.

“ The blind instinct that crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.”

For himself, although he would never contribute to preserve the ministers in office, he would wait only his Sovereign's command to take arms in defence of his country, anxious to be placed in the foremost ranks, in the post of danger, and in the hottest of the battle. He would suspend all differences of opinion until the hostile attack was repelled; and then, if he returned safe, would retain the same detestation of their conduct, and avow eternal enmity to their system.

Lord Holland acknowledged that the ministers had among them much talent, but not of a quality fitted for the present times.

Lord Holland.

“ Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis,
“ Tempus eget.”

Lofty declamation without energy; boastful eloquence without vigour; cunning without wisdom; feeble efforts or temporising expedients, would never rescue the country from the dangers which pressed upon it from all parts.

The Marquis of Lansdowne said the question was

Marquis of
Lansdowne.

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whether ministers had, by their conduct, shewn themselves capable or incapable of conducting the affairs of the country with advantage. If they had, they were entitled not only to freedom from censure, but to praise; but if they had undertaken what they knew they could not accomplish; if, from affluent circumstances, they had reduced the nation to poverty; if, from the highest credit, they had brought our finances to disrepute; then he would be a wicked man who should desire that House not to address his Sovereign to dismiss them. He adverted to the methods which had been used to excite the passions of the people during the American war, and to the confidence so strongly expressed and so entirely falsified of the effect of the coalition against France. Instead of this result, we were driven from the Continent; Great Britain dared not show herself there. She was indeed blotted out of the map of Europe. His lordship spoke in strong terms of the facility with which the French had eased themselves of their load of depreciated assignats, and with strong disapprobation of the relief afforded to government by voluntary subscriptions, and treated with great censure the efforts to extend our dominion or increase our security by conquest, citing as powerful instances the acquisition and renunciation of Corsica, and the unsuccessful attempts on St. Domingo. Even of India he had never been an admirer, except for its wealth, which might be more than equalled by the loss of life and corruption of morals which it occasions. He expatiated on the state of Ireland. "The time," he said, "might soon come when Scotland must support England to carry on a war in Ireland. If the country was made of gold, and men could spring up like mushrooms, we could not long continue upon this system. Our affairs should be entrusted to men of plain understanding, who could see before them for a few days. Although he had the experience of 1782, when ministers were called in to make a peace, and were then dismissed, yet," he said, "let us have an administration that may procure peace, and they will do much good; although those now in power

“ should return to it, and those who procure you peace
“ be hanged for their trouble.”

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1798.
Lord Borring-
don.

Lord Borringdon insisted that the augmented debt, and the calamities, on which so much had been said, light as they were when balanced with those experienced by other countries, had been the inevitable consequences of a war which had desolated the rest of Europe. On the origin and causes of the war, he shewed, from an able pamphlet by an American author, Mr. Harper, that we were not the aggressors; and from the declaration of Tallien, in an authentic public document, that it was not for or against this or that form of government in France, but against her gigantic and ambitious projects (under whatever form of government they might be attempted) that England ever would oppose herself. His lordship noticed the valuable services rendered by ministers to the country, the danger of a change at a time when the suspension of the powers of government, even for a week, must be of the most serious consequences. For himself, he never thought that the existence of the constitution depended on any one man or set of men; but he did believe that its existence would be highly endangered by committing the executive government to men whose ideas of parliamentary reform and whose supposed connexion with affiliated societies must necessarily have the effect of weakening our means of national defence, and of creating and inciting disunion throughout the kingdom.

This last topic was enforced by Lord Mulgrave, who asked if the present ministers were to be succeeded by those who would not condescend to accept office without insuring the attainment of their favourite objects, a radical reform and a peace with France? Was it not clear that the head of the Corresponding Society and the head of the Whig Club (Mr. Fox and Mr. Horne Tooke) had solemnly engaged to act together? Ministers were blamed for not having made peace with France, which would have the effect of opening all Europe to the missionaries they would send forth in crowds to propagate their revolutionary

Lord
Mulgrave.

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Lord
Grenville.

doctrines. What had the countries gained who had been the first to make peace, or those who had uniformly continued neutral? The King of Prussia had lost his provinces on the Rhine; and the conduct of the French throughout Italy, their treatment of Venice, their behaviour to the Duke of Tuscany, their return to Genoa for its partiality, and their still more recent conduct in the Pope's dominions, in his capital, and at this very time in Switzerland, afforded irresistible and awful lessons.

In a speech, powerful in argument and exact in statement of facts, Lord Grenville answered the observations and refuted the assertions advanced in support of the motion. In answer to the charges of the noble Duke, imputing crimes and follies to ministers, he referred, not to loose recollection or vague reports, but to the Journals of the House, to shew, from the speeches with which the King had opened and concluded each session of Parliament, an authentic record of the constant language of government respecting the origin, grounds, and progress of the war. The journals, if referred to, would have shewn all the allegations, that war was made for the restoration of monarchy in France, or pursued with any view but that of obtaining a safe and honourable peace, to be utterly unfounded. It would hardly be credited by any man who had not heard them, that, in all their statements of the conduct and progress of the war, the noble lords had omitted even the slightest mention of any part of our naval triumphs. On the affairs of the Continent, in which we had a secondary interest, they had dwelt with peculiar emphasis; but of that which was the primary object to Great Britain, not a word had been uttered: this was their justice. He denied the assertion that there had been a period during the successes of our allies, when France would have been disposed to peace; no precise period was specified; but so far as he could collect, it must have been during the tyranny of Robespierre. There was at that time no government in France, unless their lordships would dignify with that honourable term, assassins, butchers, and executioners,

stigmatized with the universal execration of mankind. There was no disposition to peace with England, unless it could be found in the reports of Barrère, who then first brought forward the comparison of Rome and Carthage; who then first announced the principle, *Delenda est Carthago*; leaving to his successors the first example of that language, since so completely adopted by the Directory. From the moment of the fall of Robespierre, every opportunity that pointed toward peace had been eagerly embraced; and his lordship made many strong observations on the late negotiation at Paris, and exposed, with indignant animadversion, the arguments advanced in censure of our proceedings, paying a due tribute to Lord Malmesbury, on whose conduct, in the most difficult situation, malignity and faction had never been able to cast an imputation.

Our finances had been represented as exhausted; but while he saw great burthens necessarily imposed, he saw also an ability and a spirit to bear them, and even to open fresh resources from voluntary donations; this mode the noble Marquis now condemned; but at a former period it had been strongly applauded in a memorable speech from the throne*, which, if referred to, would probably satisfy him that there was once a great minister in this country who entertained very different sentiments on the subject.

He treated with mixed derision and reprobation the observations on radical reform, and the pompous imprecations uttered by the Duke of Bedford on himself if ever he consented to act with the present ministers, whom he justly considered as hostile to it. The noble Duke might be assured, that, whatever dislike he might feel to their system, it could not possibly exceed the settled detestation which they entertained for the principles and conduct of radical reformers, though they might not think it necessary to express their sentiments in the tone or language of tragedy. Condorcet had long ago announced, with joy, that the

* 26th November, 1782, when the Marquis of Lansdowne was first lord of the treasury.

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1798.

patriots of England were labouring in that cause, adding that from such reform the transition would be short indeed to the establishment of a complete republic.

The Marquis of Lansdowne had given an estimate of the value of our foreign possessions, describing them as a load and a burthen on the shoulders of the country. Combining, therefore, the principles learnt from the supporters of the present motion, a new negotiator was to proceed to France; he was, in the first instance, to make our humble apology to the Directory for our insolence in presuming to defend ourselves, to express our deep regret at our injustice in maintaining, against their will, our properties and lives, the constitution and independence of our country, and to assure them of our sincere and contrite repentance for all the carnage which their wickedness had occasioned. We might, perhaps, expect at last that the Directory, taking some pity upon us, would agree to deliver us from part of our burthen; they might possibly have the goodness to relieve us of Jamaica; to take upon their own shoulders the defence of our Indian possessions; perhaps, to discharge us of the whole weight and load of Bengal. If these were the principles upon which the peace was to be made, he seriously believed the noble Marquis's prediction would be literally verified: the ministers who made it (whoever they might be) would certainly, and he thought deservedly, be hanged.

The Earl of
Romney.

In the course of the debate, the Earl of Romney, after noticing, with patriotic confidence, the loyalty and good disposition of his neighbours in Kent, declared that, when the present motion should have been disposed of, he would propose a resolution declaratory of the zeal and public spirit displayed by the people, in every rank, in the present crisis, and that the House deemed it their indispensable duty to renew the declaration of their invariable adherence to the principles which had governed his Majesty's councils, and in which his Parliament had uniformly concurred.

The Duke's motion was negatived, and that of Lord Romney adopted by a great majority*. A short protest was signed by six of the minority.

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Motion
negatived.
Conduct of the
seceders.

On many occasions during these debates, the absence of the seceding members of opposition formed a topic of animadversion. The Duke of Norfolk, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Sheridan, when they appeared, made some defence of their departure from their system; and the noble Duke, when he opposed the address, said he should have followed the example of the lords who absented themselves, had not his hereditary office rendered his presence indispensable. The opinions which were suppressed in Parliament were not withheld in other places. At a tavern dinner, in celebration of Mr. Fox's birth-day, the Duke of Norfolk, presiding, gave several toasts, relating to the rights of the people, the reform of Parliament, the principles of the British constitution, and the restoration of liberty to Ireland, which might have passed unnoticed, as being prepared, according to the custom on such occasions, by the stewards or other managers of the feast; but, his own health having been given, not content with a simple acknowledgment, he called upon the company to drink "Our sovereign, the majesty of the people." In a former speech, when proposing the health of Mr. Fox, his grace had said, "I shall only recall to your memory that, not twenty years ago, the illustrious George Washington had not more than two thousand men to rally around him in defence of the liberty of his country. America is now free. This day, full two thousand men are assembled in this single place. To yourselves I leave the application." When that application was rendered unambiguous, by the introduction of this phrase of modern regicide dialect, the company joined in most rapturous applause, and Mr. Horne Tooke emphatically declared his approbation of the whole conduct of Mr. Fox since he had declared himself the advocate of Parliamentary reform.

January 21.
Tavern dinner

Toast given by
the Duke of
Norfolk.

Such sentiments, so expressed, could not fail to

His dismissal
from offices.

* 113 to 13.

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May 9.
Mr. Fox ex-
cluded from
the Privy
Council.

19th.

Observations.

attract attention. Mr. Pitt was disposed to let them find their natural course into contempt and derision, without elevating him who uttered them into political importance by any particular notice*; but other members of the cabinet viewed the matter differently, and the Duke was deprived of the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and of his command of the militia for that portion of the county. Some time afterward, the King, with his own hand, erased the name of Mr. Fox from the list of privy counsellors; but his courage was not daunted; and, at an ensuing meeting of the Whig Club, he persevered in giving the obnoxious toast.

At this period, it appears that such matter is too frivolous to be mentioned in history, and that Mr. Pitt was well justified in treating these tavern overflowsings with contempt; but when the exalted character and powerful influence of the offending parties are considered; when it is recollected that rebellion was raging in Ireland, that sedition, under the guise of seeking peace and reform, was zealously active in all parts of England; when it is recollected that the low factions who had before complained of the contempt shewn toward them by the Whigs now espoused their opinions and claimed affinity with them; it may be judged that a total disregard of these proceedings would have shewn a sort of courage misbecoming those who have to govern a state. At least, this conclusion would have been obvious—that to punish the inferior disseminators of sedition, while these, their models and instigators, were left, on account of their rank, in undisturbed possession of royal favour, shewed partiality or timidity in a most disgraceful degree. In fact, the propagators of sedition and irreligion were at this period peculiarly active and daring. The state of Ireland, the discontent already infused into the people, scarcity of provisions, and the want of employment, were grounds assiduously sought out and daringly wrought upon. Parliamentary reform was the general pretext;

* I have seen a letter from him, in which these opinions are manfully expressed.

universal suffrage was, perhaps, the general aim, although some speciously put forth projects of limited change in the franchise; that is, as expressed by one of the most active labourers in the cause, that liberty could not be preserved or restored by the intemperate adherents of Paine, Barlow, and such men, but by those who declared themselves with more moderation, assisted by men "practically accommodating," and aided and led on by the wisdom and energy of a Fox, a Sheridan, and some other eminent members of both houses*.

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Two itinerant missionaries of the Corresponding Society, named Gale Jones and Binns, were arrested and brought to trial for seditious speeches at Birmingham: one was convicted, the other acquitted. In defiance of recent statutes, a field meeting was convoked by this society, in a field in the parish of Saint Pancras. The magistrates of the police offices gave notice that it would be illegal, and ordered out a police force, to act in dispersing it, if necessary. Among the most active promoters of the meeting was Mr. Ferguson, a young barrister; tribunes were erected, and a chairman appointed, when Sir William Addington, an intrepid magistrate, caused the riot act to be read: the majority dispersed; but Mr. Ferguson and some others, less complying, were arrested, and, after an examination at Bow Street, held to bail. The learned barrister brought an action against Sir William Addington for false imprisonment; but, unfortunately, he managed his own proceedings and conducted his own cause: he was nonsuited for want of a legal notice to the defendant, and thus the great question on the legality of the magistrate's conduct was not brought to a decision. In several of the obscure recesses where they persevered in holding their meetings and issuing their mandates, the society was pursued by government, and their papers seized; but no consequences resulted, except the imprisonment of some members†.

Prosecutions.

1797.

July 31.
A meeting
dispersed.

1798.

February 19.

* Wyvill's Correspondence, vol. v. p. 376 to 395: the passage above particularly referred to is at page 386.

† Annual Register, vol. xl. p. 40*.

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Infidel pub-
lications.Prosecution of
a publisher.1797.
June 24.1798.
April 28.

Newspapers.

Proceeding
against the
Morning
Chronicle.

March 19.

Among the efforts of the disaffected to unsettle the public mind, and bring established institutions into contempt, the diffusion of infidel publications had not been forgotten. The first part of Paine's *Age of Reason* had been found so dull and unimpressive, that little attention was paid to the republication ; but the second part, more audaciously profane, and more suited, by its vulgarity, to depraved minds, was eagerly taken up, and the two parts together, in a cheap form, were industriously and widely circulated. A society had been formed for carrying into effect the King's proclamation against vice and immorality, and, on their promotion, a prosecution was instituted against Thomas Williams, a bookseller, for publishing it. The trial took place before Lord Kenyon, the prosecution being conducted by Mr. Erskine. On no occasion had the eloquence of the learned advocate been displayed with more energy and effect ; the proof was very short, and the defence, by Mr. Stewart Kyd, one of the persons who had before been indicted for high treason, far from justifying the defendant, did not even raise a doubt in the minds of the jury, who, without a moment's hesitation, pronounced a verdict of guilty. In compassion to his family, and on a representation that he had desisted from publishing, and used his best endeavours to prevent the circulation of, the work, he received the mitigated sentence of a year's imprisonment, with hard labour, and to enter into his own recognizance in one thousand pounds for his good behaviour during the residue of his life*.

Beside the efforts of societies, and the publication of pamphlets, the virulence of the daily press demanded the interference of government. The first measure of the session, if the cause of complaint stood alone, might be deemed unimportant ; but, considering all circumstances, it assumes an aspect more serious. The *Morning Chronicle*, the leading opposition paper,

* Howell's *State Trials*, vol. xxvi. p. 653 ; and see, at p. 714, an interesting letter of Lord Erskine, respecting the defendant's application for mercy, and his own conduct on the occasion. Mr. Capel Loft, standing, perhaps, alone among mankind, lamented that Mr. Erskine had lessened his usefulness by taking any part in this prosecution. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, vol. v. p. 398.

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conducted with great ability, and enjoying an extensive circulation, contained a paragraph stating that the House of Lords, which had of late appeared to be nothing more than a chamber where the minister's edicts were formally registered, was now determined to vindicate its importance by regulating the dresses of the opera dancers; and, referring to the instance of a Roman emperor, who had commanded his senate, when good for nothing else, to discuss what was the best sauce for a turbot, observed, that to regulate the length of a petticoat was a much more genteel employment. This paper was, without hesitation, voted a gross and scandalous libel and breach of privilege. Mr. John Lambert and Mr. James Perry, the proprietors, being brought to the bar in custody, sought only to extenuate the offence, by alleging that the paragraph had been inserted without their knowledge.

Lord Minto expressed his strong feelings on the publication, and moved that the prisoners should pay a fine of fifty pounds each, and be committed for three months to Newgate. Lords Sydney and Grenville considered the punishment moderate, while the Earl of Derby and the Duke of Bedford deemed it excessive, and, from their own knowledge, bore testimony to Mr. Perry's character for reverence to the constitution, and abstinence from all attacks on civil and religious institutions; while the Marquis of Lansdowne thought the matter too trivial for notice; it was a paragraph of mere levity, with some wit. On a division, the House inflicted the full punishment which had been moved*.

Soon afterward, the Attorney-General moved to bring in a bill for preventing the printing and publishing newspapers, and papers of a like nature, by persons not known, and for further regulations. He noticed the difficulty of obtaining a verdict against those who issued newspapers, for want of evidence, and cited instances of the failure of justice through the change of proprietors, the disappearance of printers, and similar causes. The great blessing, peculiar to

Bill for regulating news-papers.

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1798.

the English constitution, of allowing men to publish their sentiments without restraint, ought never to be taken away, except in circumstances of great necessity and danger ; nor did he mean to infringe upon it. His intention was, that it should be the duty of the commissioners of the stamp office to see that no stamps should be delivered out to any persons, except to the proprietors, printers, or publishers of papers, whose names should be all known : that these were to make an affidavit of their being so, and to be answerable, in the same manner as those who had hitherto given their bond, for the payment of duties. To shew the necessity of preventing papers from going to France, he instanced several devices which had lately been produced to him, where, under the semblance of pretended communications and advice to government, intelligence was given to the enemy of intended naval operations, and assailable points indicated for them to attack. The object of his present motion was, to make the justice of the country effectual in public prosecutions, and to enable men of rank and consequence to bring to justice those who falsely represented their public conduct as proceeding from improper motives.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Sheridan was the first to oppose the motion : his speech was distinguished only by the mention of a weekly paper, then recently commenced, called the Anti-Jacobin, calculated, from its principles, and its wit and vigour, both in prose and verse, to give great pain and offence to the opposition party. Mr. Tierney ventured to assert, from his acquaintance with the editor of a Liverpool paper mentioned by the Attorney-General, that he had not the smallest reason to believe that the contents of the letter were false ; and he had merely inserted it with the view of affording an opportunity of contradicting its statements, if erroneous. As he enlarged some time on this topic, Earl Temple suggested, that, as he had a personal knowledge of the editor, he should give up his name, that such a scoundrel might be consigned to merited punishment. Mr. Tierney did not conceive that the noble

Mr. Tierney.

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1798.

lord, who had so proudly boasted of his stake in the country,—a stake which it now appeared had been “stolen out of the public hedge,”—had any right to put such a question. He did not stand in the light of a common informer. The person of whom he spoke did not deserve the coarse appellation which had been used; nor would the noble lord have ventured to use it to his face. He would advise him not to ask questions too flippantly; otherwise he might receive such an answer as he would not like. Other members opposed the motion, without being guilty of such gross departure from the manners of good society; but it passed without a division.

On the motion for a third reading, Mr. Jekyll predicted that men of property and responsibility must retire from newspapers altogether; they would be succeeded by persons of desperate fortune and low character, and the licentiousness of the press, instead of being diminished, would be increased: and Sir Francis Burdett deprecated the measure as part of a revolution, the seeds of which were sown as early as the accession of the present King, and the effects wisely foreseen and denounced by the great Lord Chat-ham. Unhappily ministerial artifice and corruption blinded the nation then as now; and there was too much reason to fear it would end, as that great statesman foretold, in the subversion of our old free constitution, and the establishment of a German government. The Attorney-General and Mr. Ryder briefly answered some of the objections; and Mr. Wilberforce observed, on Sir Francis Burdett's arguments, that the glowing language with which they were enforced must be intended to produce influence and operation elsewhere. After an unsuccessful attempt to procure an adjournment*, the bill passed.

June 13.
Mr. Jekyll.

Two other bills framed, or rather renewed, for the protection of government, passed after slight opposition. The first, popularly called, for suspending the Habeas Corpus, being sent down from the House of Lords, was opposed in principle by Mr. Sheridan; he was an-

Habeas Cor-
pus suspension
and Alien Act
revived.
April 20.

* Rejected, 44 to 9.

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French pre-
parations for
invasion.

February 10.

January 5.
Loan pro-
posed.

swered by Mr. Pitt, and foiled by a great majority*. Another division, little more flattering, took place on the duration of the law: ministers fixed the first of February 1799; the opposition party recommended the first of November 1798†. Against a renewal of the Alien Act, no opposition is recorded, except a speech by Mr. Tierney, relating to a matter entirely different, and apparently made for the single purpose of taunting Mr. Windham with the phrase "acquitted felons."

Whatever might be their latent designs, the French continued loud and lofty in their denunciations of this country, and apparently straining every nerve to effect an invasion and conquest. Divisions of the force called the army of England were placed on several points of the coast: Bonaparte made a tour, for the ostensible purpose of reviewing his troops, making arrangements and giving instructions for their proceeding; but in his sagacious mind, the aspect of affairs presented no sanguine hopes. In a confidential communication with one of his friends, he described the attempt as a cast too hazardous; he could not on such a turn of the die risk the fate of his lovely France (*la belle France*‡). As if determined on the attempt and assured of success, the Directory proposed to a meeting of the principal bankers of Paris, convoked with great pomp to a solemn audience, a loan, to be secured by victories. In recommendation of this strange proposition, the Minister of the Interior observed that the Romans sold the field on which Hannibal was encamped, but did not declare to the enemy before-hand that the war should be carried on at their cost; this exploit was reserved for the annals of France. The advance should be called the loan upon England, and it would fill; for the great nation executed all that it resolved. On the strength of this project, a loan of four score millions (£3,750,000) was decreed, payable out of the conquests to be made in England; it never

* 185 to 7.

† The division was 113 for the more remote, against 14.

‡ *Homme d'État*, tome v. p. 464.

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Seizure of
British mer-
chandizes.

January 4.

filled, and soon was mentioned only with contempt and ridicule. This insubstantial resource was aided by that more productive, but immeasurably pernicious, act, the seizure and confiscation of British merchandizes, executed in one day in all the ports, warehouses, and shops in France. The merchant or tradesman who had purchased at high prices, had thus the mortification of seeing his property forced into a sale, not for his benefit, at rates extremely reduced, while all hopes of recovering his advantages were cut off. The Directory also issued a decree, for which they obtained the sanction of the legislature, declaring all ships, even neutral or friendly, laden with the merchandizes of Great Britain, lawful prizes: this, it is observed, was the commencement of what was afterward termed the continental system; this the method taken to prostrate the Colossus with feet of clay*. After the victories of Lord Saint Vincent and Lord Duncan, invasion by means of a superior fleet was rendered improbable, or rather hopeless; the French withdrew their remaining naval force to ports not exactly opposite the British coast; but still menaces of invasion and the pretended preparation to convey an army across the channel were not intermitted; and for a fleet of ships of war, a flotilla of flat-bottomed boats was to be substituted. This project was no more new than formidable; it had been resorted to during the seven years' war, but was never regarded with serious apprehension†.

However futile and inefficient these menaces and preparations might appear, and however a strong government and a brave people might deride and despise them, it was not the part of wisdom to let them pass entirely unheeded, or to invite hostile attempts by an ostentatious neglect of preparation. On the subject of invasion, one spirit animated the whole country; the members of opposition, in declaring sentiments of patriotic resolution, spoke only the feelings of all who joined their cause from a sincere conviction

Prevailing
spirit in Eng-
land.

* *Homme d'État*, tome v. p. 134 et seqq.

† *Smollett*, vol. iv. p. 497; vol. v. p. 292.

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that the views of government were not wise and their policy not judicious. There existed a residue who, in the precarious hope of untried change, wished the arrival and success of the enemy; but although active in proportion to its malevolence, it was too small, obscure, and insignificant, to influence the feelings of any respectable body. The cheerful submission to unwonted taxation, and the spontaneous dedication of wealth to the public exigencies, place the people of this country in proud contrast with their vaunting enemies; while the same determination to preserve their freedom, and their religious and social institutions, covered the face of the land with volunteer defenders, armed, clothed, and accoutred without cost to the state, connected only by the ties of habitation or profession, individually free and independent, but, as a body, subject to the command and amenable to the exigencies of government. Had an enemy approached, drafts from this body would have proved an efficient aid to a regular army; while, if that necessity did not arise, their union, their appearance, and their example, were calculated, at once, to encourage and unite the well-disposed, and to dishearten and discountenance those who might be inclined to entertain opposite sentiments.

Message to
Parliament.
January 11.

At an early period of the session, Parliament was apprized, by a message from the King, that, being informed of the enemy's preparations, he had thought it right to exercise the authority vested in him by an act of the last session, and he informed them of his intention to draw out and embody such portion of the militia as should be thought necessary. A loyal and affectionate answer was returned, without even the semblance of a debate.

March 27.
Defence Bill.

Some time afterward, Mr. Dundas moved for leave to introduce a bill enabling his Majesty more effectually to provide for the defence and security of the realm, and for indemnifying persons who might suffer in their property by measures necessary for that purpose. Adverting to the zeal and spirit which, to the honour of the country did exist, he pointed out the

necessity of reducing them to a system, that the people might act with regularity instead of confusion. The object of the bill was to afford the power of knowing who were ready to appear in arms, in aid of the common cause, and to place them in the most advantageous situations. It was intended also to enable government to draw forth such force as the country might possess competent to act as pioneers, drivers of waggon, or in the various other services connected with the operations of an army. Compensation would also be secured to those who should suffer by the attempts of the enemy or the measures taken to resist them; and to those whose lands might be taken in erecting covers for batteries, or by the removal of property to prevent it falling into the hands of the invader; and provision was to be made for the infants and aged who might be left unprotected. A short conversation ensued; but nothing in the shape of opposition impeded the course of the bill in either House.

By another message, his Majesty apprized Parliament that while preparations for invasion were actively pursued in the ports of France, Flanders, and Holland, the designs of the enemy were encouraged by the correspondence and communication of traitorous and disaffected societies here: he had drawn out and embodied the provisional cavalry; he spoke with patriotic confidence of the bravery of his fleets and armies, and the zeal, public spirit, and unshaken courage of his people, already manifested in their voluntary exertions for the general defence; but he found it necessary to recommend to Parliament the immediate consideration of such further measures as might enable him to defeat the machinations of disaffected persons, and to guard against the designs of the enemy either abroad or at home.

In the House of Lords, an address was voted without an observation. In the other House there was no opposition; but Mr. Sheridan distinguished himself by a memorable and effective speech. When his Majesty felt it necessary, he said, thus to arouse and exert the strength and resources of his kingdom, any services that could

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1798.

April 20.
Message on
traitorous
correspondence.

Patriotic
speech of
Mr. Sheridan.

be afforded were only a fulfilment of that duty to which the House bound themselves by their oath of allegiance. He rejoiced at the spirit which was beginning to arise among the people; but complained of a tardiness and want of alacrity, proceeding not from disaffection or ill-timed resentment against ministers, but from a misapprehension of the real nature of the crisis. Many made of the threatened invasion a mere topic of conversation or idle discussion; treating it as a subject of amusement or curiosity, and appearing eager for its arrival, as if they were to gaze on it as some strange phenomenon; or as if they were to enjoy it as a mere show, not tremble at it as a real peril. He was confident that as soon as one drop of English blood should be shed by a Frenchman on English ground, English valour would in a moment rise to a pitch equal to what its warmest admirers could desire. But although this extreme danger might be distant and out of sight, we should not, therefore, be lulled into a fatal insensibility to all the dreadful calamities it would occasion.

Were the French to attempt an invasion, they would no doubt come furnished with flaming manifestoes, upheld with the fairest professions of the intended conduct of their army; but of those professions, not one could be believed. Some might deceive themselves by supposing that the victorious Bonaparte would not tarnish his laurels or sully his glory by permitting his army to plunder our banks, to ruin our commerce, to enslave our people; but that he was to come like a minister of grace, with no other purpose than to give peace to the cottager, restore citizens to their rights, to establish real freedom, and a liberal and humane government. Far other were the objects that whetted the valour and stimulated the prowess of modern republicans. They sought not glory; with that they were already gorged; they could not grasp at territory, for they were already incumbered with the extent of that which they had acquired. What then was their object? They would come for what they really wanted: for ships, for commerce, for cre-

dit, and for capital. They would come for the sinews, the bones, the marrow, the very heart's blood of Britain. As a price for these valuable acquisitions, they would propose to give us their staple commodity, Liberty; but should we not inquire whether what they would offer was to be of the same kind with what they keep for their home consumption? Were they to perform the fair promises they held out to us, they would establish more liberty here than they themselves enjoyed.

For the present occasion, he wished to obliterate all party differences. There were gentlemen who seemed determined to divide their enmity and opposition between the ministers and the French; but the inevitable consequence must be the conquest of the country by the invaders. He rejoiced to see the necessary spirit begin to rise throughout the country. Our defence, he observed, might be essentially aided by two very different classes of men: the one composed of those sturdy hulking fellows who were daily seen behind coaches, or following through the streets and squares their masters and mistresses; to those he would entrust the defence of the capital, and would add to them the able-bodied men which the fire and other offices might easily produce. The other class was the young gentlemen of high rank who were daily mounted on horses of high blood.

Amidst all these warlike preparations, he felt a more eager desire for peace than ever; but he warned the minister not to think of treating for peace if the French should land. That last of humiliations would, indeed, break the spirit of the country.

He then treated of the state of parties, reprobating those who imagined that the country could not be saved unless its counsels were under the guidance of Mr. Pitt or of Mr. Fox. If he were told that in a country having more than eight millions of inhabitants, only two men could be found capable of saving it, he should say that such a country was not worth saving. "But, thank heaven," he added, "there is no such dearth among us of wise and able men, of men

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“willing and prepared to save the country, in a crisis like the present. Let Englishmen but rely upon themselves; their heart and spirit will then return; arm but their hands, and you will see if the British nation will tamely submit to be hustled out of its independence.” In conclusion, he declared that his political enmity (private he had none) to his Majesty’s ministers, and his attachment to Mr. Fox and to his political principles, were unaltered and unalterable; that his desire to procure a reform in Parliament, as well as a reform of a multiplicity of abuses; to procure, if possible, indemnity for past and security against future abuses, was undiminished.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt acknowledged the great satisfaction he felt at this eloquent, dignified, and impressive speech; a speech which appeared to proceed from a heart animated with a true English spirit, and which would meet with approbation in every quarter of the kingdom. But, notwithstanding this well-merited eulogy, the minister’s speech was, on the whole, cold, repulsive, and in many parts contemptuous. The conduct of France, he said, and those circumstances which led Mr. Sheridan, at this crisis, to offer his support to government, far from being new, were nothing more than what must naturally be expected from the system which the French had manifested from the very earliest periods of their revolution, and which met with his approbation. Their conduct, in every instance, had verified the predictions of the profoundest politicians, and had proved the wisdom of that system of resistance which, happily for this country, had been adopted in opposition to that honourable gentleman’s advice. If that system had not been adopted at a period when the zeal and animation, though great, were not so great as at present, the honourable gentleman would have been left without the means of exercising that zeal which he now professed, and would no longer have had that house as a theatre in which to display his abilities. Although by the accession of the honourable gentleman, they might gain as much as could be gained by the talents of one individual, still even such an acces-

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sion could add but little to the spirit and unanimity which the nation had previously manifested. The nation had long displayed the utmost unanimity. In maintaining this arduous conflict, ministers would certainly be happy in the assistance of the honourable gentleman; but they would have been fully able to maintain the contest, even if they had not had the benefit of such assistance. "Let us," said Mr. Pitt, "give him our thanks for the support which he promises; let us give him every degree of praise for the spirit which he has displayed; but let us not be guilty of such injustice to the rest of the nation, as to suppose that the country was not fully as secure before the honourable gentleman's declaration as it is now."

One more measure, called for by the exigency of the times, is to be noticed, less for its own importance or for any debate it occasioned, than for a consequence not new, although unusual, with which it was attended. Mr. Pitt introduced a bill for more effectually manning the navy, with an intimation that, as the present alarming situation of the country made it necessary that this measure should be passed without any delay, he should wish that the bill might in one day proceed through its different stages, with a suitable pause at each, if required, and that it should be sent to the Lords for their concurrence.

May 25.
Bill for man-
ning the navy.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Tierney, who, in exercising the duties of what he called his "general retainer," had several times proceeded to the extreme point of parliamentary invective, deprecated this precipitation. From what he had lately seen, he must view all the measures of ministers as hostile to the liberty of the subject; and the present he regarded with peculiar jealousy, as it went directly to rob them of the few remaining privileges they were still permitted to enjoy.

Mr. Tierney.

Mr. Pitt, with great asperity, said that if every measure adopted against the designs of France was to be deemed hostile to the liberty of this country, his idea of liberty differed very widely from that enter-

Mr. Pitt.

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interferes.Mr. Pitt's
answer.Duel.
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tained by the honourable gentleman. If the proposed measure was necessary, and a notice of it would enable its effect to be eluded, how could the honourable gentleman's opposition to it be accounted for, but from a desire to obstruct the defence of the country?

Mr. Tierney having appealed to the chair for protection against this language as unparliamentary, the Speaker declared that whatever tended to cast a personal imputation on any member for words spoken, was disorderly and unparliamentary: it was for Mr. Pitt to explain his meaning, and for the House to consider whether the words used conveyed such an imputation. They would wait to hear his explanation.

With less respect than was due to the authority of the Chair, Mr. Pitt said, he was afraid the House must wait a long while before they heard such an explanation as was demanded of him; for he must adhere to his former declaration. He knew that he had no right to impute motives to the language which had been used, however impossible it might be not to suspect them; but he knew that he had a right to state such arguments as appeared to him conclusive against those adopted by his opponent; and while he would submit these to the judgment of the House, he would neither retract nor further explain his former expressions.

This altercation did not impede the progress of the bill; but Mr. Tierney, considering himself entitled to satisfaction, sent a challenge to Mr. Pitt, which was accepted: the parties met on Putney heath; two cases of pistols were discharged, Mr. Pitt firing into the air, when the seconds interfered, and the parties returned unhurt from the ground*.

At the conclusion of the session, the Speaker, presenting some bills for sanction, addressed to the Sovereign a dutiful and temperate, but firm and manly, speech.

In proroguing Parliament, his Majesty adverted

* Gifford's Life of Pitt, vol. v. p. 267.

with approbation to their exertions, speaking with proper feeling of the progress made by the disaffected, particularly in Ireland, and with due encomium on the determined spirit shewn by the yeomanry and volunteer forces of that kingdom, and the alacrity and public spirit displayed by the fencible and militia regiments who had volunteered their assistance in the public cause.

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.

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